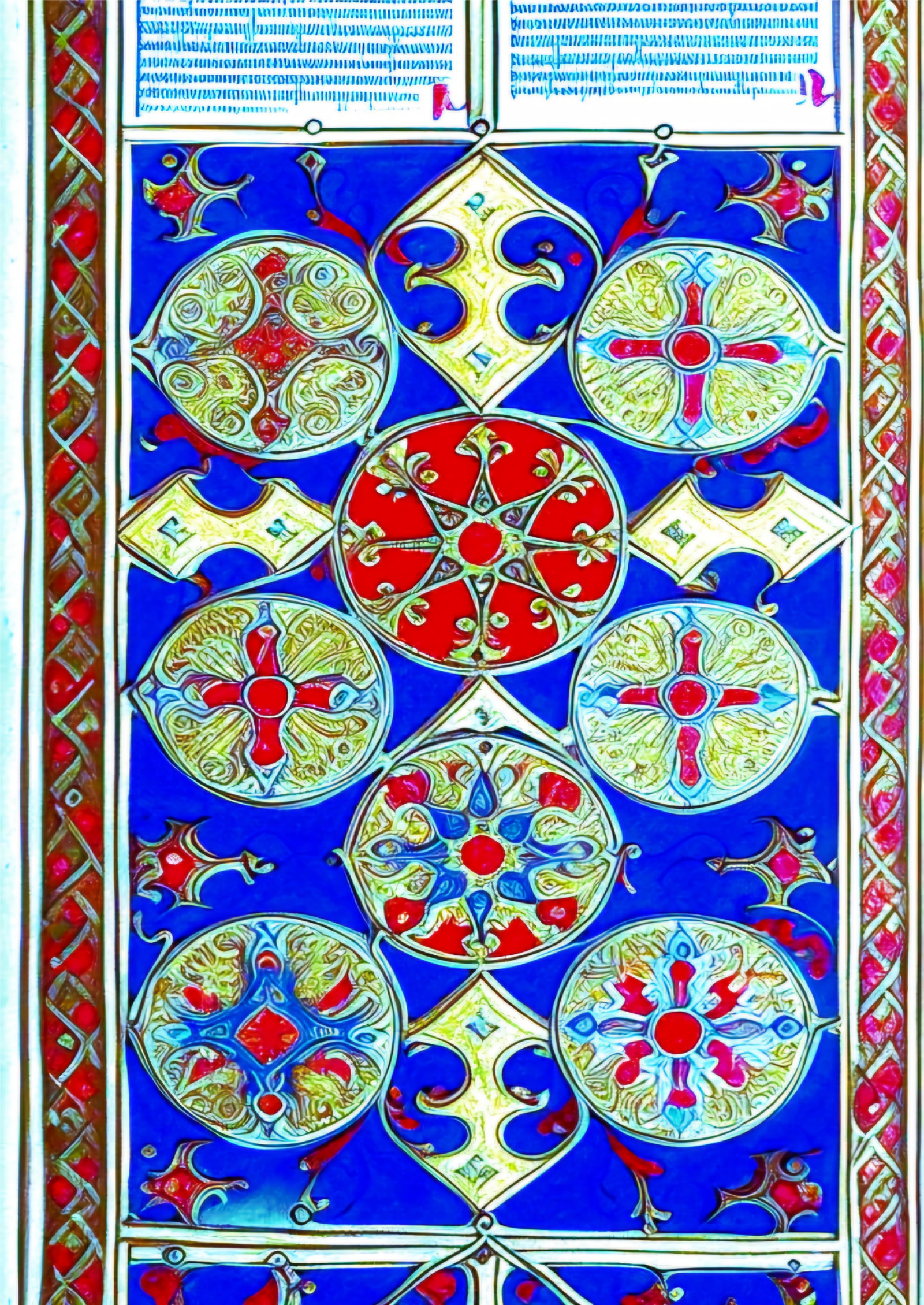

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THEOPHANY,

OR, THE

MANIFESTATION OF GOD

IN

JESUS CHRIST;

WITH

A SUPPLEMENT, TOUCHING THE THEORIES

OF THE

REV. DR. BUSHNELL.

BY ROBERT TURNBULL.

SECOND EDITION.

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AND

THE CIRCLE OF CLERGYMEN WITH WHOM

THE AUTHOR

IS ACCUSTOMED, SO PROFITABLY AND PLEASANTLY, TO MEET

IN WEEKLY CONFERENCE,

THIS VOLUME, IN ILLUSTRATION AND DEFENCE OF SOME OF

THE CARDINAL TRUTHS OF OUR COMMON CHRISTIANITY,

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PREFACE.

THE object of the following work is not polemical, but practical. Still, we have endeavored, within the limits assigned us, to make the discussion as thorough as possible, taking nothing for granted, but proving our positions step by step, by a reference to the facts and teachings of God's Word, or the obvious nature and reason of things.

We have entered somewhat into the consideration of questions which are occupying the attention of the theological world, but not, we trust, in a narrow or disputatious spirit.

Our views of the Incarnation and Atonement of Christ, may be found, in some features, peculiar, though not differing, in any essential particular, from those usually styled orthodox. It has been our aim to clear away from this subject some popular misconceptions and misstatements, and to place it, if possible, upon a scriptural and defensible basis. How far we have succeeded in this, others must decide.

We have intermingled with all our reasonings, practical views and appeals; for we are anxious not only to convey clear ideas to the intellect, but to exert a good influence upon the heart. Indeed, our principal hope is, that the work may prove useful to sincere inquirers after truth, leading them to Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

The term *Theophany*, ordinarily applied to designate the appearances or manifestations of God, in human form, under the ancient dispensations, seemed yet more appropriate to that most perfect and glorious manifestation of himself in the person of Jesus Christ. It has, therefore, been adopted as the general title of the book, being expressive of the leading idea which it is designed to set forth and establish.

The first part of the work contains a rapid sketch of the principal incidents in our Saviour's life, in order to exhibit the great truth of "God manifest in the flesh," in its historical aspects.

The Second Part consists of brief disquisitions, on the Sinlessness or Moral Perfection of Christ, His supreme Divinity, His Incarnation, and Atonement. We have also said something upon certain theories touching the person and mission of Christ, and closed the discussion with a brief practical appeal.

The present is an age of change and revolution, not only in states and dynasties, but in opinions and beliefs. This has its advantages, but it has also its disadvantages and dangers. In the hurry and excitement of investigation and debate, some good institutions, and some valuable truths may be abandoned, for no other reason than that they are common and old. Novelty and originality are not always the best guides to truth. Instead of advancing to the light, they often recede from it. Indeed, their charm frequently consists in their brilliant but delusive falsehood. Yet independent, and even reckless, thinkers will often say something worth hearing, and their very errors may turn to the advantage of the truth. Our safety consists in free and friendly investigation, a patient examination of all sides, and a common reference to the only and all-sufficient standard of theological truth, "the oracles of God."

The enemies of Christianity begin to boast that the old reverence for Jesus Christ, and especially the disposition to ascribe to him Divine attributes, is passing away, with the march of revolution and the progress of society. On this point, we have been exceedingly struck with the following, from a distinguished literary Jew. "Other great revolutions are in progress, quietly, slowly, but securely—the age of reason and philosophy among Christians. In every direction there appear evidences of a progressive but mighty change in the fundamental principles of that faith. * * The result of this manifests itself in gradually withdrawing from the great Founder of the Christian faith the Divine attributes conceded to him by his disciples and followers. Since the Reformation, this change has been gradually unfolding itself; but professing Christians did not dare to express their doubts even to themselves; they were unbelievers ever, but only in the deep recesses of the heart; but now, Reformers, Communists, Philosophers openly express their doubts."*

That this statement is exaggerated, is quite evident; nevertheless, it

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* Address of M. M. Noah at the Hebrew Synagogue, Crosby st., New York, with reference to the erection of a great Synagogue or Temple for the Jews, in the city of Jerusalem.

indicates the current of feeling among those who hope for the destruction, or, at least, the fundamental modification of the Christian faith. Its author, indeed, professes to admire the code of Christian morals, nay, he affirms that Christ and Christianity have stood between the doctrine of the true God, as held by the Jews, and its entire destruction by an idolatrous and infidel world; and in this respect shows his good sense and liberal feelings; but he rejoices in the prospective revolution of the whole Christian system, and its amalgamation with the simple theism of the Jew, the Mohammedan and the Deist. This great change, according to him, is to be brought about by the withdrawal of Divine attributes from Jesus Christ. How clearly, then, does it behoove us to know the exact truth upon this great question, and defend it from all assaults, whether secret and insidious, or more open and reckless. Above all, how necessary to do what we can to enthrone it in the hearts of all Christian people; so that in wisdom and love, they "may contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION. This work has been subjected to a careful revision, and a Supplement added, on the theories of Dr. Bushnell, which are attracting much attention. As Dr. B. has expressed himself with the utmost freedom on the opinions of others, and rather invited discussion, this, it is to be hoped, will be deemed no breach on our part, of brotherly kindness and courtesy. It has given us an opportunity of making our view of the atonement more complete and satisfactory, and will be read, we hope, as it is written, with entire seriousness and candor. The last chapter in the first edition has been cancelled, partly to make room for the additional matter, and partly because it touched upon questions which demand a more minute and ample discussion. Our views remain the same as they have been; but we readily concede that others may differ from us here, and yet hold the fundamental principles of Christian belief. May the great Head of the church unite all good men in the belief and defence of these great truths; and may the time soon come, when there shall be only "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" in every church and in every land.

HARTFORD, CONN.

THEOPHANY.

THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD IN CHRIST.

PART FIRST.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

CHAPTER I.

State of the World before the Birth of CHRIST. The Religions of Greece and Rome old and ready to perish. Judaism shorn of its power. Its selfish and fanatical character. Prevalent views of the MESSIAH. General Expectations. State of things unfavorable to the reception of a Spiritual MESSIAH. Birth of CHRIST. Its peculiarities. An Incarnation of Love. The turning point of the World's History. The Manifestation of the GODHEAD.

The RELIGIONS of the ancient world, all of which, except the Jewish, embodied the element of idolatry, had fallen into a state of dotage. The beautiful visions of Grecian polytheism grew dim. Olympus was deserted. Magnificent temples remained; but all heart-felt worship was lost. Over the political and equally idolatrous faith of Rome passed a spirit of change and dissolution. Superstitions enough remained, but all earnest and coherent faith, even in idolatry, was breaking to pieces and vanishing away. The awe-struck imagination of the elder pagans, which prostrated itself in burning adoration before the starry Host, the sacred Fire, or the Olympian Jove, could nowhere be found. A new era was opening upon the world; but what it was to be, whether of darkness and desolation, or of light and life, could not be foretold by

reference to the existing state of things. For, idolatry was replaced by scepticism, and scepticism resulted in anarchy. Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. The great Roman heart, which swayed the world, was growing languid and powerless under the influence of vice. The morals of the common people became worse and worse. Philosophy was as a bark at sea, amid storm and darkness, catching occasional glimpses of land, but more frequently dashed against the rocks, or lost in the roaring surge. At the best, it never reached the masses, and, at the time of which we are speaking, was itself becoming sceptical and vicious. The higher orders of society were distinguished only by an intenser corruption. The very poets, rising, in the olden time, to the character of prophets, threw contempt upon virtue, and laughed to scorn the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. A very few moralists speculated, to some purpose, on the subject of virtue, but could offer no sublime and resistless motives to enforce it. The tide of popular corruption swept onward, in spite of all their lofty theories and fine-spun imaginings. Their attempts at reform were spider-webs to bind Leviathan; straws, to stem the currents of the ocean. The sophists, a heartless and infidel race, controlled the popular will, and gave law to society. In a word, "the foundations were destroyed." Old things were passing away. Night and chaos were enveloping the world.

At this period, a large portion of the earth was occupied by one vast empire. From beyond the Pillars of Hercules to the Caspian sea, sweeping through the forests of Ger-

many on the one side, and the sands of the African desert on the other, a hundred and fifty millions of persons, of diversified climate and character, were consolidated into one great commonwealth. Diverging from the city of Rome, which might be called the metropolis of the world, magnificent roads stretched in every direction, connecting, by social and commercial ties, distant and flourishing cities. The old and separate dynasties, which once occupied this vast area, were broken up, and a political brotherhood established throughout the bounds of the Roman empire. It was a colossal power, and once awed the world. But it had passed its meridian. Luxury and vice undermined its strength, portentous changes threatened its ruin. The prevalent civilization, unsupported by any true faith, was gradually working its overthrow. Yet it seemed to be preparing the nations for some vast and beneficent change.

Judaism, whose roots penetrated the depths of the national heart, had grown cold and lifeless. The Shekinah had departed from the temple. The voice of its oracles was dumb. More free from the tendency to idolatry than in ancient times, it had yet lost all its vitality. The spirit of prophecy was extinct. No holy seers predicted the glories of Messiah's reign, or denounced the vengeance of Heaven upon the workers of iniquity. No Deborah sang under "the palm tree between Ramah and Bethel," no Ezekiel thundered "between the porch and the altar." The Word indeed remained; but it was a dead letter to the great body of the people. The formalism of the Pharisee

on the one hand, and the scepticism of the Sadducee on the other, paralyzed all pure and earnest feeling. The people, subjected to the galling oppression of a foreign yoke, were discontented and furious. Unheard of atrocities had been perpetrated in the family of the elder Herod, whose days were about to close in horror and blood.

In addition to all this, infidel and pagan notions began to prevail in Judea, particularly in Cæsarea, the Roman capital of the country; while the mass of the people were intoxicated with a savage fanaticism. Some holy hearts, here and there, in the temple, or among the mountains, brooded over the prophecies, and longed for that blessed era of purity and repose predicted to the fathers. Indeed the idea of a Messiah had seized the great body of the nation; but so mingled with sensual and fanatical views, that it rather exasperated than soothed their passions.

There prevailed, also, at this time, even in the Roman world, a wide-spread expectation of a mighty change to be achieved by the sudden appearance of some august and mysterious personage. This dim idea floated not only in Judea, but in Rome, in Egypt and Babylon. So familiar did it become, that it attracted the attention of the Roman poets and philosophers. "Among many," writes Tacitus, "there was a persuasion that in the ancient books of the priesthood, it was written, that at that precise time the East should become mighty, and that the sovereigns of the world should issue from Judea."* "In the east," says

* Tacitus. History, v. 13.

Suetonius, "an ancient and consistent opinion prevailed, that it was fated there should issue at this time, those who should obtain universal dominion."* This general expectation is to be traced, doubtless, to the predictions of the Hebrew prophets. Daniel's "weeks of years" were supposed to be on the point of expiring. The sceptre, in some sense, had "departed from Judah," and therefore, the *Shiloh*, or the Peacemaker, was about to come. What he was to be, few indeed understood. The views of his character and mission were modified by the dispositions of those who cherished them. Josephus, a shrewd, worldly man, subsequently recognized him in the person of the Emperor Vespasian! Some expected a mighty King, a half divine, half human conqueror; others, but comparatively a small number, a great moral Reformer, or spiritual Redeemer; and others, but fewer still, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. But the majority of the nation looked only for a temporal deliverer, his footsteps tracked with blood, and his long reign of earthly power and splendor encircling the globe.

Hence the general state of the Jewish nation was quite unfavorable to the reception and acknowledgment of a spiritual Messiah, whose peaceful reign should be that only of righteousness and love. Carnal and besotted, they were more likely to crush, than to honor the Son of God.

Indeed, taking the world as a whole, it was a dark and godless era. The race, as if abandoned by Heaven, stag-

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* Suetonius Ves. p. 4.

gered, like a vessel at sea, amid tempest and gloom, and seemed on the very point of being shipwrecked forever.

At this juncture Jesus Christ was born into the world,—in an humble town,—of obscure parentage,—in the still hour of night,—in a condition of lowliness and poverty peculiarly striking,—and without any general or imposing demonstrations. And why? Simply, because he was to be a spiritual Teacher, a divine Redeemer, whose "still small voice" of love and power was gently, but irresistibly, to penetrate the human heart, and transform it into the beauty of holiness. Little is recorded of this unostentatious but august event. It was proclaimed, as has been often said, not in the streets of Jerusalem, or the purlieus of the temple, but in the quiet scenes of the country; not to the Sanhedrim of the Jewish nation, nor to the priesthood in solemn conclave, but to a few pious shepherds, as they watched their flocks by night on the plains of Bethlehem.

In all this, we discern something of divine beauty and wisdom. God, in creating and blessing, is not so much in the whirlwind and the storm, as in the soft, still voice. His mightiest changes are achieved by invisible, and apparently trivial means. He works not at the surface, but at the centre. He comes rather in the solitude and silence of night, like the dew beneath the stars, than in the glare and tumult of day. In this respect, he reverses all the expectations of man. "Without observation," like his own reign of purity and love, he accomplishes the designs of his providence and grace. Not with the might of kings, or the tread of armies, but with the quiet majesty, the still,

but resistless power of supreme and everlasting dominion. He taketh the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh may glory in his presence. Evermore he magnifies purity and love over might and display.

Moreover, the incarnation of Jesus was a veiling rather than a revealing of absolute power. It was love, rather than force, which assumed the human form. By a new and peculiar manifestation, love and suffering were to be revealed the mightiest powers in the universe. Enthroned, by the death of the Son of God, they were to be proved resistless and immortal. It was meet, therefore, that, in lowliness and poverty, the birth of Jesus should correspond with his death, the beginning with the end of his mysterious career.

"How might God have appeared," says Tholuck, "when he met a finite race? There rests concealed behind all the excellence of nature, there rests concealed behind every spectacle of history, there is ruling concealed in the depth of the earth, there is ruling concealed in the immensity of the starry world, the eternal Spirit, which we call God! There are hours when thou dost imagine thyself to come near him; oh! there are wonderful hours in the life of man, when it is as if the Great Mystery of all existence would at once burst asunder its bar, and come forth, unveiled! Our inmost soul is agitated at such an hour. But how is it when the bar is actually burst asunder; when he who dwells in unapproachable light, where no man can draw near; when the infinite Spirit, who sustains heaven

and earth, assumes a visible form, and appears among his finite creatures? Who does not now expect, what is written of the day of his second coming, that his heavens, which are his throne, will tremble; that this small earth, his footstool, will shake; that a foreboding sentiment, such as we have elsewhere discovered at the occurrence of great natural phenomena, will seize all tribes of the earth, and cause some to rejoice and others to weep! * * Yet behold, as nature is everywhere still when she creates, and loud only when she destroys, so is she still, indescribably still, when the greatest of all who are born of women, comes into the world. The sun did not stand motionless in the heavens when he came; it was night. He did not make his first appearance in the capital city; but in one of the smallest places of the land. No sleeper waked up at his coming; but only they who watched through the night had intelligence of his advent. The earth that night did not shake; the heaven that night did not tremble. Only a few childlike souls, who then kept vigil at his birth, trembled; yet their trembling was a trembling for joy. * * The Lord was not in the tempest, but in the gentle, soft sound; and the heavenly hosts sung at his birth, 'Peace on earth, and good will to men.'"*

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* German Selections, by Edwards & Park, pp. 128, 129. The same ideas are finely expressed in the following extract from Milman's "Fall of Jerusalem:"

"Thou wast born of woman, thou didst come,
O Holiest! to this world of sin and gloom,
Not in thy dread omnipotent array;
And not by thunder strewed
Was thy tempestuous road;
Nor indignation burned before thee on thy way.

There was a special reason why Jesus should be "born of a virgin," for then would it be seen and acknowledged, that he was "the holy One of God." The unstained innocence of the mother, her serene beauty and gentleness of character, and the entire separation of Jesus by means of this circumstance, from the corrupted mass of humanity, would form a peculiar attraction to all pure minds. It was meet, also, that the incarnation of Jesus should be a sacred mystery, around which the affections of his followers should linger with delight and awe. This feeling indeed has been exaggerated and vitiated among the Catholics, but it is a natural feeling, and not only so, but productive of the most beneficent results. There is something inexpressibly touch-

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But thee a soft and naked child,
Thy mother undefiled,
In the rude manger laid to rest,
From off her virgin breast.

"The heavens were not commanded to prepare
A gorgeous canopy of golden air;
Nor stoop'd their lamps th' enthroned fires on high;
A single silent star
Came wandering from afar,
Gliding uncheck'd and calm along the liquid sky;
The Eastern sages leading on
As at a kingly throne,
To lay their gold and odors sweet
Before thy infant feet.

"The earth and ocean were not hush'd to hear
Bright harmony from every starry sphere;
Nor at thy presence brake the voice of song
From all the cherub choirs,
And seraph's burning lyres,
Pour'd through the host of Heaven the charmed clouds along;
One angel troop the strain began,
Of all the race of man,
By simple shepherds heard alone
That soft Hosanna's tone."

ing in the thought, expressed by Wordsworth, that in the virgin mother were "blended and reconciled" those singular but beautiful contrasts

> "Of mother's love, and maiden purity,
> Of high and low, celestial with terrene."

Rude minds have wondered that "the Highest" was born of woman, especially that the Godhead "vested" itself in the form of a child. But more thoughtful and spiritual minds have discerned in this very thing, a meaning and design which awaken their profoundest reverence. They cannot see that mechanical greatness, or material expansion, have aught in them akin to the nature of God, or that adventitious circumstances, however imposing, can add any thing to his infinite grandeur. Indeed, they look beyond all the depths of the starry world, and all the immensities of the creation, to find his indivisible essence, and boundless majesty. Not physical grandeur, or mechanical force, but spirituality, love and purity, constitute their idea of his glory. Hence, they can adore the manifestation of that glory as well in the person of "the holy child Jesus," as in the magnificence of the universe. God is a Spirit! God is love! And since man in his unstained innocence, was made in the image of God, no fitter temple of the Deity can be found than that of a living man. "The true Shekinah," says John Chrysostom, "is Man!" Even in ruins, the traces of his primitive grandeur declare, "Here God once dwelt."* "The highest Being," says Carlyle,

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*See "Howe's Living Temple," where this idea is expanded with great beauty and depth of meaning.

"reveals himself in man. This body, these faculties, this life of ours, is it not all as a vesture for that unnamed?" Hence he adds, with something of error and extravagance, but with a wonderful vein of truth! "No nobler feeling than this of admiration for one greater than himself dwells in man. It is to this hour, and at all hours, the vivifying influence of man's life. Religion, I find, stands upon it; not paganism only, but far higher and truer religions, all religion hitherto known. Hero-worship, heart felt, prostrate admiration, submission, burning, boundless, for a noblest, godlike Form of Man, is it not the germ of Christianity itself? The greatest of all heroes is One whom I do not name here."*

In the estimation of the world, in the estimation even of philosophy, the birth of Jesus was a small event.† Yet it was "the turning point of the world's history." Then the "day-star from on high" visited us. Then "the Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in his wings." Then commenced a form of civilization, which was to penetrate the nations with an invisible but resistless power, and which at the present hour, is the only thing really alive, active and diffusive in society. At this point all ancient prophecy culminated, all modern faith began. New principles of action, new codes of morals, new sources of power, new modes of enjoyment, strange fears, still stranger hopes, dawned upon the race. The whole life and energy of

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* Hero Worship, p. 13.

† We mean ancient philosophy; modern philosophy has changed its tone. The greatest philosopher in Germany, Schelling, speaks of the birth of Christ as "the turning point of the world's history."

modern society were here. In this, as in a germ, lay Dante, Milton and Cowper, nay more, Shakespeare, Schiller and Gœthé, Newton, Pascal and Fenelon, Jeremy Taylor and John Howard; all, in fact, that we call modern literature and religion. Thence sprang liberty and law, true freedom and fraternity, that divine and universal brotherhood yet to envelope the globe. For it was infinite Love coming into union and fellowship with man, entering into the heart and soul of society, incarnating itself in the very depths of human degradation and wretchedness. In a word, it was a new moral creation, in which God said, Let there be light! and there was light! In this, therefore, was fulfilled the glowing prediction of Isaiah: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and he shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."*

Thus the birth of Christ, insignificant in its seeming, was inexpressibly great in its reality. Apparently the advent of a simple child, it was the incarnation of the Godhead. A mere incident in an obscure corner of the earth, which disturbed neither the course of nature, nor the course of society, it was the origin of untold revolutions, the beginning

* The expression *Mighty God*, has been translated by the German critics and others, *Mighty Hero*, *Mighty King*, or *Conqueror*, which gives a very good and expressive meaning, harmonizing strikingly with the remarks in the text. The following is De Wette's translation, which we should willingly accept as a just one: "Denn ein klnd wird uns geboren, und es ruhet die Herrschaft auf einer schulter, und man nennet seinen namen Wunder, Verather, Starker Held, Frieden's Furst, etc."

Heilige Schrift. De Wette.

of a new civilization and a new religion, of a new world and a new heaven! No wonder, then, that it was hymned by angels, as was the creation of the world at first, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Not only on the plains of Bethlehem, but in the Courts of Heaven resounded the glad acclaim. For as soon as the news was announced to the shepherds, "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will to men!"

"In heaven the rapturous song began,
And sweet seraphic fire
Through all the shining legions ran,
And strung and tuned the lyre.

Swift through the vast expanse it flew,
And loud the echo rolled;
The theme, the song, the joy was new,
'Twas more than heaven could hold."

All this and much more has been styled a myth, or allegorical fiction, by the sceptics of Germany, and by their imitators in this country, a supposition as baseless and wild as the most fanciful and extravagant of all the dreams of oriental romance. If any fact in ancient history is well established, it is that of the birth of Jesus, and the wonderful change therein wrought in the history of the world. But if the birth of Jesus is well established, then the miraculousness of that birth, the mystery of the incarnation, the song of the angels,—the visit of the magi,—and the star in the east, or the luminous appearance which guided their steps to the place of his nativity, all, in a word, connected

with this event which is supernatural and divine, is equally well established.* The same authority which proves the one proves also the other. If the one is natural, in the circumstances supposed, so also are the others. The whole must stand or fall together, like the branches and leaves with the trunk of the tree. But no historical facts are better established, and those, therefore, who doubt them or resolve them, in any measure, into myths or allegories, will doubt any historical fact, and make myths of the most established verities. Thus Weissé, a German theologian of some repute, makes the elder Herod himself a myth, speaking of him as the symbol or representation of worldly power! So we might make Julius Cæsar or Marc Antony the representatives of Roman ambition, and thus sublimate them into historical myths! Who knows but Napoleon, in some future age, will come to be regarded as a magnificent myth! Perhaps the wise men of a distant day will gravely assert that the immortal Washington, and the battles of Lexington and Bunker hill are ancient American myths! "He is not to me a true Christian," says the illustrious Niebuhr, who carried his historical doubts and investigations as far as any man; so far, indeed, as to make a complete revolution in the opinions of the learned, relative to the early history of Rome, and whose keen sagacity and boundless information have won the admiration of the

* These magi, or Eastern sages, came from Babylon, between which and Jerusalem existed an intimate intercourse of travel and commerce. There also the Jews long resided, and maintained their peculiar sentiments and usages. These magi, then, in all probability, were acquainted with the predictions relative to the Messiah, and knew that the time was near when his appearance might be expected.

civilized world,—"He is not to me a true Christian who does not consider the history of Christ's earthly life in accordance with its true literal sense, with all its miracles, as really a fact as any other thing recorded in history, and is not as calmly and firmly convinced of it; who has not the strongest conviction of all points in the Apostle's creed, in their literal acceptation; who does not regard every doctrine and every command of the New Testament as unquestionably of divine revelation."* A testimony like this is worth all the assertions and imaginings of men who have departed alike from the faith and from common sense.

The birth of Christ, as a miracle, was necessary to the revelation of his Divinity. Here the incarnation or the manifestation of the Godhead in a living human form, the most glorious symbol or image of God, and therefore the fittest for his manifestation, commenced. The *Word*, the divine Logos or Revealer, who in the beginning was "with God" and "was God," "became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.†" It is thence a

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* Christian Review, Vol. VI.—p. 109. See also Neander's Life of Christ—Introduction. To those who wish to investigate the genuineness and authenticity of the Gospels, we recommend Professor Greenleaf's work upon this subject. He has applied to the investigation the principles of legal evidence. Some excellent observations upon the same subject may be found in Starkie upon Evidence, first volume. Neander's Life of Christ, though heavy and somewhat obscure and fanciful upon some points, may also be consulted with advantage. It is a complete answer to Strauss's *Leben Jesu*. "The Genuineness of the Gospels," 3 vols., Cambridge; by Professor Norton, is a learned and elaborate work, written with much force and beauty, but marred by rationalistic views and criticisms. Still it may be consulted with great benefit by the critical and well-informed reader. With the exceptions we have named, it is the most thorough and scholar-like work upon the subject in the English language.

† 1 John, i. 14.

celestial truth to be received, a sacred mystery to be adored, an ineffable secret to be cherished, in the profoundest depths of an humble and contrite heart.

CHAPTER II.

The Childhood and Youth of CHRIST. Its import and value. The Condition of Judea before the commencement of CHRIST'S public Ministry. John the Baptist. His character and mission. Baptism of CHRIST. Its import. The Temptation. Its design. The Teaching and Preaching of JESUS. Its peculiarities. The bearing of his early ministrations upon the great object of his mission. His calmness and energy. His self-possession. His enthusiasm and self-sacrifice.

ONE of the old fathers has remarked, that Jesus passed through all the stages of human life, from infancy to manhood, that he might sanctify them all. The remark is not only beautiful, but scriptural and just. "It behooved him, in all things, to be made like unto his brethren." He was thus fitted to become the brother and friend of man, in all possible relations. How profoundly this single circumstance has affected the sympathies of mankind, every thoughtful person must be aware. Childhood and old age have felt it alike. All ranks and conditions have acknowledged its influence. The fact, that Jesus, "the eternal Word of God," was born of woman, that he lived as a child,—

> "The happiest, the holiest,
> That ever blessed the earth;"*

that he acted the part of a grateful and obedient Son,—that

* "O, is it not a blessed thought,
Children of human birth,
That once the Saviour was a child,
And lived upon the earth,"

he aided, by manual toil, in providing for his father's household,—that he ate and drank, slept and awaked, smiled and wept, rejoiced and suffered, loved and prayed, struggled and died, like other men, yet all the while possessed of an infinite and immortal nature, involves the principal secrets of his amazing power over the heart. Moreover, this has tended to impart dignity and worth to human nature itself, and invest our mortal state with a new and sublime interest. The divine Majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ seems thereby to be veiled, and this doubtless is the case to some extent. It was an infinite condescension on his part "to take upon him the seed of Abraham," and appear "in the form of man," glorious and beautiful as that form might be; but the Divinity of Christ was not thereby degraded, as some have rashly concluded. The union between the highest Essence in the universe and the lowliest state of man, was natural and becoming. There is no shrine of the Deity so magnificent, as the spotless body of "the holy child Jesus." The infinite lies nearer to the soul of a child than we are aware. Indeed, it is "all about us in our infancy."

Let us not, then, be surprised, if we find the Son of God, who is equally the Son of man, subjected to the will of his human parents, increasing in years and strength, and in favor with God and man, performing the accustomed round of duties, secular and religious, mingling with his neighbors and kinsfolk in the humble town of Nazareth,—asking and hearing questions with the doctors in the temple, working

at the trade of a carpenter, or celebrating the rites of the Jewish faith. Let us not be surprised, if we behold him weeping with those that weep, and rejoicing with those that rejoice, toiling through life's rugged road, and mingling in the temptations and sufferings of our common lot. Above all, let us not be shocked, if we hear his townspeople speak of him contemptuously as "the carpenter's son," whose kinsfolk they knew, or if we find him "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." If the life of man, in any state, is "a great and inscrutable mystery"—if the life especially of a good man, even in the lowest walks of poverty, has in it something divine, let us not wonder that the Son of God should pass through such a life, and thereby make it more "sublime" than poets and philosophers have ever dreamed.

Little or nothing is related of the first thirty years of our Saviour's course. A single circumstance, however, like an opening through the clouds into the serene depths beyond, reveals its celestial quality. "Wist ye not," said he to his astonished parents, touching his interview with the doctors in the temple, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Here the consciousness of a lofty spiritual destiny, and an actual preparation for it, are indicated among the common cares and sympathies of his life. No wonder the virgin mother "laid up this saying in her heart." It contains the secret of his nature and mission, and proves the possession, in boyhood, of the same views and feelings which made it "a joy" to die for the race.

Some time before the commencement of Christ's public

career, Judea was reduced to the condition of a Roman province. Archelaus, after a weak and ill-omened reign as ethnarch for nine years, was banished into Gaul, and the country subjected to the despotic and capricious control of Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator, who took every opportunity of humbling the Jews, and breaking their national spirit. He introduced, not only into Cæsarea, his ordinary residence, but into Jerusalem, the idolatrous standards of the Roman army, and attempted to suspend certain bucklers, bearing the image of the Emperor, in the palace of Herod. The Sanhedrim was still permitted to exercise some jurisdiction, but was sadly checked and degraded, in comparison with its former authority and influence. Throughout the country, publicans or tax-gatherers under the appointment of Rome, constantly reminded the people of their subjection to a foreign ruler. Galling burdens chafed them at every point. Their very religion was subjected to rude pagan interference. The high-priest was displaced at the pleasure of the Roman procurator, and sometimes with insulting levity and violence. Religious sects were inflamed against each other. The most fierce and sanguinary fanaticism raged amongst the followers and imitators of Judas the Gaulonite. Excesses and tumults were common, though repressed by the iron hand of Pilate, who more than once mingled the blood of zealots with their sacrifices. Indeed, the whole country was in a ferment, resembling a volcano heaving and dashing beneath the thin surface previous to a violent irruption.

John the Baptist, stern and lofty as a rock of the desert,

was commissioned by Heaven as the messenger of the Lord, who, coming "in the power and spirit of Elias, was to introduce him to the world. He made his appearance in the wilderness of Judea, by the banks of the sacred Jordan. In awful and thrilling tones, like a voice from eternity, he proclaimed the speedy advent of the Messiah, and the establishment of his kingdom on earth. In view of this august event he baptized, in the Jordan, great multitudes who repented of their sins, and professed to receive his teaching respecting the promised Messiah. But few, comparatively, understood the spiritual nature of "the kingdom of God," and all, with scarce an exception, were expecting in the Christ, a mighty conqueror, a glorious earth-born king. That the great multitudes who were baptized by John, in anticipation of the Messiah's advent, were sincere in their belief, so far as it went, cannot be doubted. A great and happy reformation of manners was the result, by which the way was prepared for the public appearance of the Messiah. In a word, the dawn of the morning was visible on the hills. The star which heralded the approaching sun, shone bright and clear in the horizon.

So great was the influence and authority of John the Baptist, that he attracted the attention of the Jewish Council, who sent a deputation to inquire into his claims. He distinctly acknowledged that he was not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor Jeremiah, nor one of the old prophets, who, according to Jewish tradition, was to precede the coming of the Messiah, and perform certain wonderful actions in the temple and elsewhere; but he intimated that he was

the Herald of the Lord, whose "baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost" was dimly typified by his inferior baptism in the waters of the Jordan.

While John was thus engaged attracting the attention of the nation, and gathering crowds of followers, Jesus himself appeared on the banks of the river, and requested baptism at his hands. Struck with his appearance of dignity, and inwardly convinced that he was the Messiah, though not officially certified of the fact, John, who freely acknowledged his immeasurable inferiority to Christ, declined the service, saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" But yielding to the authority of Jesus, who replied, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness," he went down with him into the water and administered the sacred rite. As Jesus ascended from the water, a luminous appearance, in the form, or with the motion of a dove,* (in all ages the symbol of purity and gentleness, and, in this instance, of the Holy Ghost,) descended upon the head of Jesus, and a voice was heard from heaven, recognizing him as the Son of God, well pleasing to the Father, and his accredited Messenger to the world. It was at this point that John knew, for certainty, that Jesus was the promised Messiah, and from that hour he commended him to the people as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." "For, although the Baptist had a glimpse of him," says Jeremy Taylor, "by the first irradiations of

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* *Ωσεὶ περιστερὰν*, Matt. 3, 16. *Εν σωματικῷ εἴδει*, Luke 3, 22.

the Spirit, yet John professed that he therefore came baptizing with water, that 'Jesus might be manifested to Israel,' and it was also a sign given to the Baptist himself, that 'on whomsoever he saw the Spirit descending and remaining,' he is the person 'that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.' And God chose to actuate the sign at the waters of Jordan, in great and religious assemblies, convened there at John's baptism; and therefore, Jesus came to be baptized, and, by this baptism, became known to John, who, as before he gave to him an indiscriminate testimony, so now he pointed out the person in his sermons and discourses, and by calling him 'the Lamb of God,' prophesied of his passion, and preached him to be the world's Redeemer and the sacrifice for mankind."*

More than ever did the Baptist feel his own inferiority to Jesus Christ, and the consequent inferiority of his mission, a circumstance which he ever avowed in the most expressive terms, a proof at once of his humility and his greatness. The Bridegroom was come, and he was satisfied. He therefore joyfully united with his followers in the exaltation of Jesus, as the true Messiah, the Bridegroom of the Church, "the Redeemer" of the world. "He must increase, but I must decrease." The day breaks—the twilight fades. The sun itself is rising in the heavens, and the herald star is lost in the deepening radiance.

It may appear a strange thing that Jesus was baptized, but it was in accordance with his character and mission.

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* Works, Vol. II, p. 184, English edition.

Baptism shadows forth "the remission of sins," and would seem suitable only for a guilty penitent. But "he who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Hence it was meet, in assuming the work of our Redemption, to take upon him our sin in this emblematic rite. Nothing indeed could be more appropriate at the commencement of his public career.

In addition to this, baptism, as all admit, is a symbol of separation, of transition and consecration. Thus it behooved Christ, in this solemn ordinance, to "fulfill all righteousness." By this means, he was separated from the common and inferior life of man to one of a mediatorial and sacrificial character. He then passed into a new sphere, and publicly consecrated himself to the great work of our salvation. This, doubtless, is the reason why the particular occasion was selected, to reveal him to John as the Messiah, and announce his claims to the world, as the beloved Son of God, and the Messenger of his will. "This," says the venerable bishop already quoted, "was the inauguration and proclamation of the Messias, when he began to be the great prophet of the New Covenant. And this was the greatest meeting that ever was upon earth, when the whole cabinet of the mysterious Trinity was opened and shown, as much as the capacities of our present imperfections will permit; the second person in the veil of humanity, the third in the shape, or with the motion of a dove; but the first kept his primitive state; and as to the Israelites, he gave notice by way of caution, 'ye saw no shape, but ye heard a voice;' so also now God the Father

gave testimony to his holy Son, and appeared only in a voice without any bodily presentment."*

Furthermore, may not the baptism of Christ be regarded as an emblem of the great atonement, the principal and crowning act of our Lord's mediation on earth? Did it not adumbrate that baptism of blood and agony, that mysterious passage through "the Red Sea" of his sufferings, which closed the drama of his life, and to which, in his conversations with his disciples, he so frequently referred? "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it is accomplished." So that there is more of meaning than most persons are aware, in the idea of the Apostle, when he says that we are "buried with him by baptism unto death." "For if we are planted in the *likeness* of his death"—in that, namely, which is the likeness or symbol of his death, "we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

For these reasons, the baptism of Christ may be regarded as a public dedication of Christ to the great work of our salvation—as an expressive symbol of the manner in which that work was to be accomplished,—and as a solemn confirmation of the rite itself for the observance of his followers.

After his baptism, Jesus was taken into the wilderness to endure the most terrible temptation which ever assaulted our race. He must not only be *consecrated* but *tested*,—that, overcoming evil by good, he might teach his followers

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* Works, Vol. II, p. 185.

a lesson of endurance and self-denial. Whatever was the nature of this temptation, the alternative was presented to him of earthly dominion, the applause of men, and the splendors of state, or a life of sorrow and suffering with a kingdom of righteousness and love. Not a moment did he hesitate between them; but true to his high nature and mission, rejected all earthly power and influence, even in the support of religion, and preferred a life of poverty and shame with moral influence and spiritual dominion.* This fact, like his birth and his baptism, was descriptive of his future course, and the nature of that pure and peaceful reign which he should establish in the minds of men. In this respect, the views of Christ were original and peculiar. Rising above his own age, and above all other ages, above all the speculations of philosophy, and all the usages of society, he rejected all external aids, all physical force and temporal rule, and established a religion purely spiritual, and thence universal and eternal. "My kingdom," said he, explaining this sublime fact, "is not of this world." No, it is a divine kingdom over which he presides—"the kingdom of God,"—in other words, a kingdom of truth, righteousness and love. How Godlike this! How worthy of the character and claims of a Divine Messenger! Men have never been able to separate the spiritual from the carnal, the Divine from the earthly. But Jesus did this at the

* It has been strikingly remarked, that what Jesus rejected, the corrupted church of the sixth century accepted by uniting the power and splendor of earthly rule with the religion of the Son of God.

very commencement of his course, and thereby read the world a lesson, which they are too slow to learn.

True to this grand conception, Jesus went forth "to teach and to preach," amid the hills and valleys of Palestine. He addressed himself chiefly to the common people, in language of great originality, naturalness and force. He spoke to them respecting God and the soul, duty and danger, life and immortality, as man had never before spoken. So simple, so clear, so striking, so authoritative was it, that they could not but listen, and acknowledge its power. Attracting to himself a few simple and child-like souls, he made known to them the principles of his kingdom, in terms so familiar and striking, so transparent and perfect, that, while from our familiarity with them, they seem the merest commonplaces, they are yet the most profound and thrilling verities. But they never would have become commonplaces, even to us, unless they had possessed, at first, the most perfect originality, as well as the most transparent simplicity. Meditated deeply, they will appear most wonderful in their simple beauty and divine significance. So natural and yet so pregnant, so clear and yet so striking, so plain and yet so profound, they resemble the works of God, which, while they attract a child by their freshness and beauty, engage a philosopher by their grandeur and perfection. The language of Christ is not that of the schools, far less of the rhetoricians. It is scarcely language at all; so transparent is it, you see the *things* rather than the *words*. It is a revelation—a revelation as varied, as fresh and significant as that of nature itself.

How new, yet how easy and familiar—just like the well-known face of nature, in which homeliness and beauty, variety and grandeur, flitting shadows and gleams of sunlight, are mingled in singular but harmonious combination. In a word, it is the language of intuition, of revelation—that is to say, of God. "Never man spake like this man!" Sometimes in the synagogues, but oftener in the open air, by the way-side, or by the well, on the hill-top, or by the margin of the lake, in the shadow of the temple, or in the deep solitude of the wilderness, he uttered his words of wisdom and love. Nothing could be more natural, nothing more beautiful and impressive. "In the spring," says Jortin, "our Saviour went into the fields, and sat down on a mountain, and made the discourse which is recorded in St. Matthew, and which is full of observations arising from the things which opened themselves to his sight. For when he exhorted his disciples to trust in God, he bade them behold the fowls of the air, which were then flying about them, and were fed by Divine Providence, though they did not 'sow nor reap, nor gather into barns.' He bade them take notice of the lilies of the field which were then blown, and were so beautifully clothed by the same power, and yet 'toiled not,' like the husbandmen who were then at work. Being in a place where they had a wide prospect of cultivated land, he bade them observe how God caused the sun to shine, and the rain to descend upon the fields and gardens, even of the wicked and ungrateful. And he continued to convey his doctrine to them under rural images, speaking of good *trees*, and corrupt trees; of

wolves in *sheep's* clothing; of grapes not growing upon thorns, or figs on thistles; of the folly of casting precious things to dogs and swine; of good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. Speaking at the same time to the people, many of whom were fishermen, and lived much upon fish, he says: *What man of you will give his son a serpent if he ask a fish?* Therefore, when he said in the same discourse, *Ye are the light of the world; a city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid*, it is probable that he pointed to a city within their view, situated upon the brow of a hill. And when he called them *the salt of the earth*, he alluded, perhaps, to the husbandmen who were manuring the ground. And when he compared every person who observed his precepts to a man who built a house upon a rock, which stood firm; and every one who slighted his word, to a man who built a house upon the sand, which was thrown down by the winds and floods—when he used this comparison, 'tis not improbable that he had before his eyes, houses standing upon high ground, and houses standing in the valley in a ruinous condition, which had been destroyed by inundations."*

The originality and imaginative beauty of his parables, in which the highest, most abstract and spiritual truths are embodied, in familiar forms, must have greatly struck the minds of the people. And yet how profound they are! Containing a mine of spiritual truth, they are yet simple and clear as the sunshine or the dew. God and the soul,

* Discourses by Jortin.

duty and reward, sin and punishment, life and death, time and eternity, heaven and hell, are incarnated in these wondrous revelations. The most delicate and affecting relations, the deepest passions, the most amazing facts and changes in the world of spirit, are pictured forth in shapes of living beauty and power. What can surpass the story of "the Prodigal Son." "the Rich Man and Lazarus," "the good Shepherd," the "Ten Virgins" and "the Marriage Supper." What stores of holy wisdom are contained in these, and similar symbolic revelations!

While the common people heard him gladly, such was the grossness of the age, such the carnality of its views, that the great mass understood little of his doctrine. It was lodged, however, like living seed in the hearts of a few heaven-born men. Checking their carnal views, correcting their prejudices and winning their affections, he gradually led them forth from the gross darkness of a corrupted Judaism, into the pure light of Christianity. His miracles at first were few and unimposing, just enough to attract attention to the truth, and attest the divinity of his mission. They were all distinguished by their gentle and benevolent character, and like his parables, had a profound spiritual import. The poor, the maimed, the sorrowful, the halt, the blind, the dumb, the paralytic, the lunatic, followed him, and he healed them all; but while healing their bodily maladies he never failed to administer to their spiritual wants; thus teaching his disciples, in all ages of the world, that his religion is intended to benefit and bless at once the body and the soul, and that it behooves them to "visit the

fatherless and widows in their affliction," while "keeping themselves unspotted from the world." "He went about doing good," preaching righteousness, charity and peace, directing the attention of his followers to the paternal character of God, the universal brotherhood of man, and that holy love which unites us to God and to one another by indissoluble and eternal ties; intimating his own special and mysterious relation, first to the Father, and secondly to the race; announcing in no ambiguous terms, that divine atonement which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem, by means of suffering and death; and "bringing to light" that "life hid with God," and that "glorious immortality," to be conferred upon those who believe in his name. But it was long before he was fully understood, even by his immediate followers. Many who recognized him as the Messiah forsook him, when they began to perceive his spiritual and self-denying character. A few only apprehended his meaning, and clung to his person. And even they long labored under the influence of national and personal prejudices, and followed him, so to speak, in the dark, by the force of a secret and irresistible attraction.

At first our Saviour's ministrations were somewhat cautious and private—partly that his true character and claims might not be mistaken; partly, too, that his more carnal followers might not force him into a false position, and partly that the crowning act of his life, that for which chiefly he had come into the world, might not be precipitated. How calm he was, how still and deliberate—how free from aught like false enthusiasm or fanaticism! How divine,

in this, as in all else of his wonderful career! He appears, in fact, to have embodied the perfection of reason with the perfection of love. His feeling was so intense as to carry him forward with irresistible energy, to the cross and the crown; and yet so still, (doubtless by reason of the depth and steadiness of its current,) that its momentum could not be perceived. In every thing he was calm, patient, deliberate—and yet how direct, how earnest, how resistless in his progress to the end! As he approached "his hour," he became more and more open, decided and bold, moving right onward with the majesty of a God, to that cross of agony and shame which he had deliberately chosen as the means of a world's salvation.

CHAPTER III.

Capernaum the centre of CHRIST'S operations. The reason of this. His attendance at the three great festivals. His appearance in the temple. Its import. Miracle at the second Passover. The assertion and vindication of his claims as the Son of GOD. His appearance at the third annual festival or series of festivals. The resurrection of Lazarus, and the excitement thence produced. The death of CHRIST resolved by the Jewish Sanhedrim. The reason of his rejection by the Jews, Sadducees, Pharisees, Herodians, Essenes. JESUS presses steadily to the closing scene. Appearance at the Passover, and triumphal entry into the Holy City. Institution of the Supper. His agony in Gethsemane. Contrasts. Humanity and Divinity—suffering and beatitude—degradation and glory. The meaning of the whole. The finite united with the Infinite, the sinful with the Sinless.

IN the commencement, and during a large portion of his ministry, our Saviour retired into Galilee, making Capernaum, at the north-western extremity of the sea of Galilee, or lake of Gennesareth, which lies, in solemn beauty, amid the lofty mountains of northern Palestine, the centre of his plans and operations.* Here he collected and organized his first disciples. Here he ordained his twelve apostles, and here, also, he performed some of his most affecting miracles. There was peculiar wisdom in this. The metropolis of

* The sea of Galilee, or lake of Gennesareth, is also called the sea of Tiberias, sometimes the sea of Cinneroth, from the adjacent country, or the principal town upon its shores. According to Josephus and Pliny, it is sixteen miles in length, and about six in breadth. It has been compared to the lake of Geneva, though somewhat inferior to the latter in extent and grandeur. Lying in a deep basin, and surrounded by lofty mountains, it has an air of peculiar stillness and grandeur. "Its broad and extended surface," says Dr. E. D. Clarke, "covering the bottom of a profound valley, environed by lofty and precipitous eminences, added to the impression of a certain reverential awe, under which every Christian pilgrim approaches it, gives it a character of dignity unparalleled by any similar scenery.—*Travels*, p. 462.

the country was proud and vicious. Moreover, it was in a disturbed and unhappy condition, and therefore little prepared to receive the teachings or appreciate the character of a purely spiritual Messiah. But the people were prepared, in some measure, to listen to the Son of God, in the quiet rural retreats, under the shadow of the solitary mountain, on the brink of the river, or of the placid lake. Besides, the district of Galilee possessed a large and intelligent population. So populous was it, that according to Josephus, in a region of between fifty and sixty miles in length, and between sixty and seventy in breadth, were no less than two-hundred and four towns and villages, the smallest of which contained 15,000 souls. This would give to the whole province something like three to four millions of inhabitants. Of these, the great majority were Jews, with a considerable sprinkling of Syrian Greeks, and of other foreign races. In this region, then governed by Herod Antipas, who does not appear to have been particularly hostile to Jesus, the latter was permitted to pursue his mission with greater freedom than in Judea. Still, as the time drew near for the complete development of his plans, he advanced towards Jerusalem, and proclaimed there, in clear and decisive tones, his high and mysterious claims as the true Messiah, the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.

He made a point of attending the annual festivals, particularly that of the Passover, at which times immense multitudes of pious Jews, from all parts of the world, crowded the streets and suburbs of Jerusalem, and pressed with their offerings towards "the holy place." According

to the received opinion, three such festivals mark the principal points in our Saviour's public career. At the first of these, he appeared in the temple, as its Lord and Possessor, and drove out the impious and mercenary traders who defiled, with their traffic, its outer courts. This would be understood by the people generally as an assertion of his Messiahship, and his claim to the homage and service of all. For it had been distinctly predicted by one of the ancient prophets: "The Lord whom ye seek will suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in." Hence they immediately demanded a sign to justify such a claim. By this they meant not an ordinary sign or miracle, such as healing the sick, or opening the eyes of the blind, but a more public and magnificent sign—"a sign from Heaven," as they phrased it, that is to say, such a sign as they deemed peculiar to the mission of the Messiah. This, according to some, would be the glorious appearance of Christ in the clouds of heaven, or in the Holy Place, surrounded by celestial light, and angelic attendance, or according to others, his standing upon Mount Olivet, sword in hand, prepared to lead the nation to victory and renown, or the actual destruction, by his hand, of the Roman armies. But our Saviour replied to them by a mysterious symbolic allusion to his own death and resurrection, which they understood with reference to the destruction and rebuilding of the temple. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again." This jarred upon their feelings of reverence for the holy place,

and shocked all their preconceptions of the Messiah and his reign.

At the second Passover he performed a marvellous cure at the pool of Bethesda, claimed to be the Lord of the Sabbath, and asserted his right, in consequence of his oneness with the Father, to make changes in the institutions of religion. This disturbed the Pharisees. But so far from satisfying them, he claimed more than this, and insisted that, being the Son of God, and his representative on earth, he had the power of life and death, of sovereignty and judgment, and that all men were bound to "honor him, even as they honor the Father." In proof of this, he referred to the testimony of John the Baptist, the attestation of the Father, and the corroborative testimony of the old Testament Scriptures.

At the commencement of the third annual festival, or series of festivals, Jesus conceals himself from observation near the fountains of the Jordan. He also permits his followers to go up to Jerusalem without him, veiling under ambiguous language his own intention of going thither, in order that he may act with greater freedom, and prevent any indiscreet announcement of his approach to the city. While many inquiries are made respecting him, and the minds of the multitude in Jerusalem are agitated with the discussion of his claims, he suddenly appears in the temple, and takes his place as a public teacher. At different intervals he proclaims in the boldest manner his high prerogatives as the messenger of the covenant, asserts more distinctly than ever his mysterious relations to the Father,

cures a man born blind, and explains himself, in such a way, as greatly to enrage the Jewish Sanhedrim, and shock the prejudices of the people. After this he retires for a time, from Jerusalem; but about the feast of the dedication in the winter, again makes his appearance in one of the arcades or porticoes of the temple, which, from its unusual splendor, was called *Solomon's;* and in reply to a question respecting the reality of his claims, affirms his absolute oneness with the Father, and explains it in such a way as to excite the rage of the hearers, who take up stones to stone him, as one guilty of the most horrible blasphemy. Escaping out of their hands, he again retires from the city; and after some time, is found in Bethany, where he raises Lazarus from the dead, an event which produces in Jerusalem the greatest excitement. The priests are alarmed, the Sanhedrim is instantly summoned, and the death of Jesus is deliberately resolved. But our Saviour again avoids the gathering storm, and withdraws to the wild and mountainous district which divides Judea from Samaria.

It was in this gradual way that Jesus made preparation for the completion of his work. As he approached the termination of his earthly career, his teachings became more clear and decisive, his miracles more striking and stupendous. It is quite obvious, however, that his character and claims were all fitted to excite the prejudices and hostility of the more influential classes, and indeed of the Jewish people generally. Their views of religion were local and selfish. They expected a conquering Messiah, and sighed for the deliverance of the nation from the yoke

of Rome. Venerating the temple and the laws of Moses, they supposed that the Messiah would restore both to their pristine supremacy and splendor, that he would make Jerusalem the metropolis of the world, and go forth with their armies, "conquering and to conquer." Hence even those who were at first attracted to Christ, and longed to enthrone him in the heart of the nation, were disappointed in his character, and gradually forsook him. The rulers trembled for their power. The Rabbis or teachers of the nation were shocked with his ideas of renovation and reform. The Sadducees hated him for his purity and spirituality. The Pharisees for his liberality and gentleness. The Herodians for his unworldliness and self-sacrifice. The Essenes for his freedom, his naturalness, his all-comprehending love.* In fact they neither understood his character nor his religious system, and all distinctly perceived that his success must issue in a complete revolution of the nation. He set aside their authority with a word, poured contempt upon their subtle distinctions and learned comments, upset their traditionary theology, demolished even their personal claims and official dignities. Making no account of their sanctity, and stultifying all their pretensions, he insisted on their being "born again," becoming "as little children," and commencing a new spiritual life. Thus they perceived that if Jesus prevailed, the whole fabric of their power and authority must crumble into ruins. That a humble Galilean peasant, a Nazarene, a carpenter, should

* For an account of the different Jewish sects, see "Neander's Life of Christ."

demand all this, and demand it as one having authority, and not as the Scribes, demand it especially as the Divine Messiah, the Son of the living God, the Judge of the quick and the dead, was preposterous, was treasonable and blasphemous.

On this ground, then, the leaders of the people joined issue with Jesus, and resolved upon his destruction. In this, however, they were only fulfilling the decrees of God; for it was absolutely necessary that Jesus should die. This, indeed, was one of the great ends of his mission. Though the Son of the Highest, the Sovereign of the soul, the Judge of the world, he "must needs suffer many things of the chief-priests, and die at Jerusalem." Thus, "we see Jesus," says Paul, "made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. For it became him, by whom and for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

Jesus therefore steadily presses towards the closing scene. At the passover, he again appears in Jerusalem, assumes the port and majesty of the Messiah, rides in mingled humility and triumph into the Holy City, amid the hosannas of his followers—meets with his immediate disciples in an upper room, plainly intimates to them the approaching crisis, and institutes the solemn rite, symbolic of his "bloody passion." He discourses with them freely respecting this and kindred events, gives them such advice as their circumstances demand, and pours out his whole

heart of love, in a strain of sacred fervor and eloquence. This is what Jeremy Taylor calls "his farewell sermon, rarely mixed of sadness and joys, and studded with mysteries as with emeralds." Among other things he refers to his anticipated "glorification"—his entrance into heaven, "where he was before"—the gift of the Holy Comforter, as a consequence of his departure—his "second coming"—and the glorious state of perfection and happiness into which he would finally bring all his followers. He commends them and his Church universal to the care of the Father, and prays for their unity and everlasting felicity.

Soon after this he takes three of his apostles, Peter, James, and John, who a little while before had seen "his majesty" on the Mount of Transfiguration, and visits, at the hour of night, the lonely shades of Gethsemane, just under the brow of Olivet, from which he had wept over Jerusalem, and there seeks to prepare his mind for the terrible conflict before him, a conflict the most mysterious and awful the universe has seen. For even the anticipation of it produces a fearful agony, which causes the blood to stand in huge drops, upon his prostrate frame. But he grows calm, and goes forth, in all the majesty of innocence, to the fearful sacrifice.

But how strange is all this humiliation—all this distress on the part of one who claims to be the Son of God, the Light of the world, the Life of men, the Sovereign of angels, the Judge of the living and the dead! But why strange, when for this very purpose he came into the world, not in glory, but in humiliation, to work out the redemption

of the race, "suffering to the lowest bent of weakness in the flesh"—that he might "triumph to the highest pitch of glory in the Spirit."* Let us not forget, that, as in his birth, so during the whole of his life, the majesty of Jesus was generally concealed from the eyes of men. It is the sun behind the clouds. And yet enough of its splendor at intervals, breaks through the gloom, to indicate the presence of the luminary beyond. It was *God*, manifest *in the flesh;* and such a manifestation, so far as the mere attributes of majesty and power are concerned, must, after all, be a veiling of the Deity. Hence, to carnal minds, the Godhead of Christ is wonderfully hidden by his lowly birth, his poverty and self-denial, his agony in the garden, and especially his "passion" on the cross. Enough, however, both of his natural and moral grandeur, gleams through the whole, that even sceptics have been compelled to acknowledge him in some sense, Divine. His innocence, his perfect self-forgetfulness, his unparalleled love and charity, his strange superiority to the race, his mysteriousness of character and conduct, his entire separation from the world, like 'a star dwelling apart,' even while mingling freely in society; his authority so lofty and decisive, his natural, yet singular and all-commanding speech, his mastery over nature, walking now upon the waves of the sea, now becoming invisible, now appearing unexpectedly—anon forgiving sin, and attesting his power to do so by miraculous cures—opening blind eyes, unstopping deaf ears, dissipating the leprous

* Milton. Of Reformation in England, p. 1.

taint, and raising the very dead; his serenity and elevation, so unearthly and divine; his visible communion with a higher world, his sovereignty in the realm of mind; his intuitive knowledge of character, his clear insight into futurity, the homage of his followers, the worship of angels, his proclaimed unity with God, and the attestations of the Father, his transfiguration on the Mount, "where his face did shine like the sun, and his raiment was white and glistening," the attendance of Moses and Elias in glory, as if in expression of their homage for his person, and the wonderful revolution from Judaism to Christianity, to be accomplished by "his decease at Jerusalem;" his superiority over death and the grave, to which he voluntarily yielded for a specific object; his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension "to the right hand of the Majesty on high," all these and similar manifestations of the Divinity, prove, that even when on earth there dwelt in the man Christ Jesus, "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

But the natural might and majesty of Jesus, if we may so express it, were shaded and held in check by the higher purposes of his mission. On earth he exhibited himself mainly as an humble and suffering man, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" and he did this in order that truth, purity and love might be enthroned over all material pomp and carnal glory. Indeed the higher and more spiritual nature of Christ, to the purified vision of saints and angels, is best revealed through his lowliness; for it is not so much the *might* of Jehovah, as his *grace;* his power of *creation*, as his power of *redemption*, which forms his es-

sential glory. The Jews, in their deep carnality, would gladly have received a reigning and a conquering God; but a God in the form of a suffering Man,—as it were, a God despised, a God rejected, a God crucified, they could not endure. So, also, the Greeks, who sought after wisdom, would have received a Jupiter or a Mercury, a God of power and supremacy, or of wisdom and beauty; but a God manifest in the flesh of "the Nazarene,"—to their minds was an infinite folly! And the reason of this is to be found not in the purity and elevation, but in the narrowness and selfishness, of their views. Their idea of of infinite greatness, after all, turns out to be one of infinite littleness. Their minds were too dark, their natures too grovelling, to admit the true conception of the Divine perfection, as it shines in the face of Jesus. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." But to pure and spiritual minds, how clear, how resplendent the manifestation of his Divinity! How inexpressibly radiant and beautiful, how glorious and all-transforming! He who caused the light to shine out of darkness hath shined into the hearts of such, to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus. In the incarnation and earthly life of Christ, God condescended to unite what apostate man would ever sever, the highest Essence with the lowliest form, the blessedness and glory of Heaven with the degradation and sorrow of earth. He has bridged the gulf which separates the finite from the infinite, the sinful from the sinless. He has married, by holy and indissoluble ties, the immortal and

ever blessed Life, "the Bridegroom" of Heaven, to the mortal and suffering Church of the redeemed on earth. For that suffering "Son of Man," that true Brother and Redeemer of the race, is instinct with love divine. He belongs to the infinite and the eternal. In his feeble frame shrines itself all the fullness of the Godhead. From every chink and fissure of the temple, trembling and falling to ruins on Calvary, streams the very brightness of the Father's glory. The world, in the days of his flesh, saw not this, do not see it now. But all regenerate spirits see it, and rejoice under its influence. "We beheld his glory." This, then, is the true and last *Theophany*, of which all prior manifestations or outshinings of the Godhead were but the hints and symbols—"the Mystery of the Father of Christ and of God"—the incarnation of that divine and Everlasting Life and Love, which is "the same yesterday, to-day and forever," which, says the apostle, "is Christ in you the hope of glory." Herein, then, is fulfilled that wonderful prayer of Christ, just before his departure to the invisible world: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe in me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they may also be *one in us;* that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one even as we are one; I in them, *and Thou in me*, that they may be made perfect *in one*, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."*

* 1 John, xvii. 20, 23.

CHAPTER IV.

Last Hours of CHRIST on Earth. Seizure in the garden. Citation before the Sanhedrim. His innocence proved. His confession. Charged with blasphemy. Taken before Pilate and Herod. The two Malefactors. Abandoned to the multitude. Crucified on Calvary. His voluntary death. The manifestation of his Godhead in the gloom and agony. Grandeur of the mystery. Prayer to CHRIST crucified.

WE approach the closing scene of our Saviour's life on earth. It is midnight. The shadows of Olivet rest upon the green inclosures beneath, in one of which Jesus and his wearied disciples have spent some dreary hours. Nothing breaks the silence, save the occasional cry of the watchman from the walls of Jerusalem, or the howl of a solitary dog prowling in "the field of blood." The agony and prayer of Christ have given place to serenity and submission. His disciples are aroused from their heavy torpor, and all are preparing to leave the garden. Suddenly, torches flash amid the olive trees, and the place is filled with armed men. Judas, who heads them, advances to Jesus, and salutes him with a kiss, the sign of cowardly betrayal, which our Saviour rebukes with that calm dignity peculiar to himself. At first the soldiers are overawed, as if struck by a sudden panic. Perhaps they knew not who it was they had come to seize, or were so moved by his majestic bearing, as, for the moment, to lose their self-possession. "They went backward," says the Evangelist,

"and fell to the ground." Reassured by Jesus himself, who, in this slight incident, manifests his infinite superiority, they take possession of his person. Peter had drawn a sword to defend his Master, and cut off the ear of one of the party. This act of violence is gently rebuked by Jesus, who works a miracle to heal the wound, thus proving that while he yielded to the brute force of his enemies, he yet possessed all power in heaven and on earth.

He was first led to the house of Annas, probably an ex-High-Priest, and then to that of Caiaphas, son-in-law to Annas, and High-Priest for the time being. Here the Sanhedrim was hastily assembled for the examination of the prisoner. In reply to the question of the High-Priest touching his doctrines, Jesus referred to his public career, and the open manner in which he had promulgated his tenets. Incensed at his dignified composure, a servant struck him on the mouth, an act of malignant insult. But he bore it with the same divine composure. "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil, but if well, why smitest thou me?" So far from conciliating their regard, this was the signal to more atrocious acts of violence. The members of the Sanhedrim appear to have left at the time, and yielded him up to their attendants. He was blindfolded, buffeted, and spit upon, by these cowardly menials, whose minds, like those of their masters, were too gross to perceive the dignity of the adorable sufferer. Till morning they subjected him to all sorts of insults, "speaking many things blasphemously against him."

When the day dawned, "the elders of the people and the

chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council." All possible charges were brought against him, but nothing was proved by the false and contradictory witnesses. His innocence must have been obvious to all, had they not blinded their minds and hardened their hearts by prejudice and passion. Despairing of finding anything against him by an ordinary process, the crafty High-Priest adjures him, in the name of God, to tell them whether he is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. He distinctly admits the claim, and intimates that notwithstanding their present unbelief, they would yet see him "sitting on the right hand of the power of God," a claim equal to that of Supreme Divinity. Then the High-Priest rends his clothes—in ordinary circumstances, a most indecorous act, but in the present, an intended expression of his abhorrence of what he considers blasphemy. Thereupon his condemnation is passed by the whole council, who had already resolved upon his death.

As the Jewish Sanhedrim had not, at this time, the power of inflicting death, or, for sinister motives, desired the concurrence of the civil government, they immediately conveyed Jesus to the bar of the Roman governor. Ascertaining that he belonged to Galilee, Pilate, to relieve himself of further responsibility, sent him to Herod the Tetrarch, who happened to be in Jerusalem at this time, doubtless for the purpose of celebrating the Passover. Herod, who had heard much of the miracles of Christ, and desired for a long time to see him, was gratified with this act of attention on the part of Pilate. They had been at

enmity for some time, and this circumstance, it appears, was the means of their reconciliation. To the numerous questions of Herod, dictated, no doubt, more by contemptuous curiosity, than a desire to know the truth, or to do justice in the case, Jesus "answered him nothing." Incensed, Herod and his men of war set him at nought and mocked him, arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, (in token of their contempt,) and sent him again to Pilate. All this, and much more of like sort, Jesus bore with the calm dignity and meek submission of a superior nature, bent on suffering all things for a sublime and beneficent end.

It would seem that only a deputation from the Jewish council had accompanied Jesus to the presence of Herod and of Pilate, while the body of the council waited in suspense, probably in one of the great rooms of the temple, where they were accustomed to hold their sessions. It was at this time that Judas, stung by remorse at having betrayed innocent blood, returned to the council, confessed his guilt, and threw the money which they had paid him, at their feet, a striking testimony to the divinity of our Saviour's mission. Having done this, Judas went and "hanged himself," and "falling headlong, all his bowels gushed out." Peter, under the pressure of severe temptation, had denied his Master, but catching his eye of purity and love, he instantly felt the wrong, and went out and wept bitterly. Thus by *remorse* and *penitence* on the part of those two, as well as by constancy and love on the part of others, did the immediate disciples of our Lord confirm his claims as the true Messiah, the Son of the Living God.

So also did Pilate, in his office of magistrate. Ascertaining, to his entire satisfaction, that Jesus had no treasonable design against the government, and that the aim of his mission was to establish the truth, and found among men an empire of righteousness and love, he positively declared to the Jews that "he found no fault in him." But this selfish and mercenary man could not appreciate the character of Christ, and probably regarding him as a fanatic or an impostor, he yielded at last to the importunities and threats of his enemies. "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend." Every thing, therefore, must be sacrificed for power and place. Yet was he distinctly warned, and that, too, by his own wife, who seems to have formed some right apprehensions of the true character of Christ, and "suffered many things" respecting him "in a dream." But the tide of faction pressed around him. Hate, bigotry, passion, intense and overpowering, rushed like a flood, higher and higher, wilder and wilder; when, yielding to its fury, Pilate washed his hands, and gave orders for the crucifixion of Jesus. It cost him a terrible struggle. To avoid it, he was willing to scourge the adorable sufferer, hoping thereby to excite pity in the bosoms of the frantic mob. But they cried out the more, *Crucify him! crucify him!* He proposed to substitute Barabbas, and release Jesus; but no! Barabbas, robber and murderer, was saved, and Jesus, the Son of God, the friend of man, must die!

But where were his followers at this time? Where, especially, was that portion of the giddy populace, who had strewn palm branches in his way, and rent the air with

hosannas, as he rode in triumph into the capital? Stunned or frightened, they forsook him and fled, or, it may be, disappointed in their hopes of a conquering Messiah, actually joined with his enemies in the cry, now filling the air with its savage yells,—*Crucify him! crucify him!*

Delivered to the will of his enemies, rough soldiers are at hand to seize the sufferer and conduct him to crucifixion. But before proceeding to this, they subject him to all kinds of mockery and insult. Arraying him in the symbols of mock royalty, they bend in pretended homage before him, strike him with the palms of their hands, spit upon him, and then stripping off his magnificent attire, dress him in his own humble garb, and lead him forth to execution. Worn out by long fasting, and the insulting cruelties of the soldiery, Jesus faints under the burden of his cross, or cross-beam, which malefactors were accustomed to bear to the place of crucifixion. A stranger from Cyrene, and it may be a disciple of Christ, entering the city, is seized and made to bear the cross after him. A great company of people, among whom are many females, follow, beating their bosoms, and giving utterance to their astonishment and grief, in loud sobs and wailings. Jesus turns round, and with a look of pity, says to them—"weep not for me, but rather weep for yourselves and your children"—and then predicts the fearful doom yet to come upon Jerusalem.

The mournful procession has passed the city walls, and arrived at Calvary—not precisely a hill, as we are accustomed to suppose, but a gentle elevation, called Golgotha, or the place of a scull, from its being the ordinary scene of

executions, a dismal place, and, in the estimation of the Jews, accursed. The outer garments of Jesus are stripped off and parted among the soldiers. Putting his lips to the potion of wine and myrrh, usually given to criminals previous to execution, he refuses to drink of it, in order to preserve his faculties clear and self-possessed. He then permits himself to be *nailed* through his hands and feet, to the rugged wood, which is elevated, and let down violently into its socket, racking every joint and muscle of the writhing frame.

See, then, the Son of God, suspended between heaven and earth, in company with two malefactors, one on this side, and another on that, "hanging," as one of the old divines expresses it, upon "four dismal wounds," and bearing upon his spirit the charge of a world's redemption! A sight, such as earth saw never—a wonder to men and angels—a mystery which God only can solve!

Now is "the hour and the power of darkness." His enemies cast his claims in his teeth, and beseech him to come down from the cross. Not only the rude populace, but members of the Sanhedrim, the chief-priests and rulers of the people, heap insult and scorn upon the dying Saviour. But his only reply is, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" One of the malefactors at his side reviles him, as if he were the cause of his calamities; the other, who, as Saurin remarks, appears for the time to be the only believer in the world, craves his help: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom"—a prayer instantly answered by Jesus, who, forgetting his own pangs, the

insults of the rabble, and the maledictions of the other criminal, replies, with the mingled majesty and mercy of a God, "Verily, I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Beautiful episode in the fearful drama of agony and blood—as instructive, too, as it is beautiful. There hangs the Son of God in his "passion"—the centre of hope to the world. On one side is the perishing scorner,—type of all who reject the Saviour and perish in their sins; on the other, the penitent,—symbol of all who believe in Jesus, and rest with him forever in the Paradise of God. On the Cross, our Saviour is omnipotent to forgive. Even in dying, he saves from death! When poorest, he bestows the greatest wealth. When utterly forsaken on earth, he opens heaven to the dying sinner!

From the same spirit of kindness he provides for his mother, standing there, in anguish unutterable, under the shadow of his cross, commending her to the care of "the beloved disciple"—one of the most touching instances at once of maternal and of filial affection.

From the third hour, or nine o'clock in the morning, until the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon, hangs our Saviour, in mysterious anguish, upon the cross. At noon the sun hides his face. From that time, three whole hours, enveloped in the darkness of an eclipse, or in that sullen gloom which usually precedes an earthquake, breathing heavily, and becoming fainter and fainter, he suffers unutterable pangs; when, finally, his earthly nature giving way, he cries out with a loud voice: "*Eloi, Eloi, lama,*

sabacthani? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" words of profound anguish and ineffable import, which it were presumption perhaps to interpret.* One compassionate hand raises a sponge of vinegar, or weak wine, to cheer the pale sufferer, but it is instantly arrested by the bystanders, who willingly misunderstanding his words, command him to wait and see whether "that great and certain sign of the Messiah, the appearance of Elijah, would now take place."

But no! he is manifestly dying. Yet how calm and self-possessed! While the human nature yields to the pressure of agony, we see the Divinity which that nature enshrines, assuming the mastery, and *voluntarily* resigning all of perishable in his mysterious person to the stroke of death. "When Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar, he said, *It is finished:* and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." Beholding the scene, the Roman centurion, as if expressing the testimony of nature, exclaimed: "This was a righteous man"—"this was the Son of God!" Even Rousseau, uttering, so to speak, the extorted conviction of scepticism, declares, "that if Socrates died like a philosopher, Jesus died like a God!" while the greatest

* It may be remarked that this expression, borrowed from the twenty-second Psalm, had been consecrated for ages, as the utterance of deep anguish. It ought never to be regarded as a dogmatic formula, having all the precision of a theological proposition; and cannot, therefore, with any sort of propriety, be cited against the doctrine of our Saviour's Divinity. It is the spontaneous language of a heart oppressed with grief and despair. Often, however, it has been inadvertently cited, to prove the departure of the Godhead from the Manhood of Jesus, in the hour of his agony, than which no supposition can be more unscriptural or absurd. Christ suffered as the Son of God. His whole nature was engaged in the closing act of the world's redemption.

genius of the nineteenth century speaks of the event as a mystery, "in which the Divine depth of sorrow lies hid."*

But, O! what a descent is here. The Son of God crucified like a felon! The Sovereign of the Seraphim expiring on the Cross! The Messiah dead! Is he not Divine? Is he not omnipotent? Was he not before Abraham? And is he not the same yesterday, to-day, and forever? Dead! —how is that?—why is that? It cannot be—it must not be! For then Life itself is dead! Yes,—and that is the very wonder of the Cross—the very mystery of redemption. "For while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "One died for all, for that all were dead." And this was done, that "through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

But in all this shame, agony and dissolution, accounted for when we look at the incarnation, and consequent humanity of Christ, do you not see tokens the most striking, of Supreme power and changeless Divinity? Whence

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* In an interesting fragment of Goethe's, called *Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre*, the various religions which have appeared in the world are characterized in a very striking manner; the Christian Religion being regarded as the last and most perfect. Jesus Christ is styled "the Divine Man;" his life is set up for "a pattern and an example," and his death as "a model of exalted patience." The Gospel is styled, symbolically, "the Sanctuary of Sorrow;" the sufferings of Christ upon the Cross, which seem to awe the poet's spirit, are denominated "mysterious secrets, in which *the divine depth of sorrow* lies hid." Goethe's *Wanderjahre* was published in his seventy-second year, when his mind, having passed through its first agitations of scepticism and sorrow, had settled into a vague but calm and beautiful faith in "the good and true." That much doubt, and many errors yet remained, is quite evident; but he cherished a profound reverence for "the Religion of Sorrow," as he loved to call it, whose "divine depth" he had so beautifully characterized.

that serenity, and even joy, in the holy sufferer?* Whence that boundless love—that infinite forgiveness? Whence the very power voluntarily to suffer such a death? Why did nature sympathize in his agony, as if it were instinct with life, and felt every pang which pierced his heart? Why hid the sun his beams? Why trembled the earth? Why rent the rocks? Why rose the dead? Why burst the veil of the temple from the top to the bottom, revealing the sacred mysteries, and proclaiming the close of Judaism? Ah, were it possible to have looked into heaven, at that august moment, we should have seen each angel, hanging over his harp in breathless suspense, and the infinite God himself absorbed in the mighty event. It was the heart of the Deity which uttered itself in the sigh of nature, the gloom of the heavens, the trembling of the earth, the rending of the rocks. For nature

> "Is but a name for an effect,
> Whose cause is God."

This, doubtless, is the reason why the Apostle speaks of redemption as the "mystery of the Father of Christ and of God"—that the whole Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, are equally revealed in it, and that the hymns of the glorified rise forever to "God and the Lamb."

> "Bound every heart! and every bosom burn!
> Oh, what a scale of miracles is here!
> Its lowest round, high planted in the skies:
> Its towering summit, lost beyond the thought
> Of man or angel! Oh, that I could climb

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* "For the joy set before him, he endured the cross." This, of course, was the joy of gratified benevolence, which is equally delightful in its anticipation and enjoyment.

The wonderful ascent with equal praise!
Praise! flow forever, (if astonishment
Will give thee leave;) my praise! forever flow;
Praise, ardent, cordial, constant; to high Heaven
More fragrant than Arabia sacrificed,
And all her spicy mountains in a flame."

It is evening. The darkness and tumult of the day have subsided. Nought is heard but the hollow murmur of the great city. The red rays of the departing sun tinge the hill-tops around Jerusalem, and linger, in mournful beauty, upon the dome of the temple and the tower of Antonia. Three crosses, with three melancholy burdens, now still, are darkly marked against the sky, and cast long shadows upon the hill of Calvary. As it is the preparation for the Passover—as, moreover, the crucifixion of Jesus has excited the populace, vast crowds are clustered here and there about the temple, on the walls of the city, or on the neighboring mountains. Men and women are moving to and fro beyond the city walls, some with downcast or thoughtful look, others with flushed and angry visage. Afar off, perhaps on the brow of Olivet, some of the disciples and friends of Jesus, and all the women that followed him from Galilee, among whom are Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less, and of Joses, and Salome, the mother of Zebedee's children, and many other women, stand gazing, with fixed and mournful look, upon the cross of Christ. "And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were dene, smote their breasts and returned." The beloved disciple, too, is there, lingering around the cross of his Master; and he informs us, that when the soldiers came to hasten the

death of the malefactors, seeing it was the preparation of the Passover, after breaking the legs of the two thieves, approached the body of Jesus, and found him dead. Whereupon one of the soldiers, permitted by God to commit the rude act, as if to certify us as to the reality of his death, "with a spear pierced his side," when "forthwith came thereout blood and water."

Here, then, let us draw near, and look upon Him whom we, as well as those that crucified him, have pierced; and as we look, let us offer this prayer:*

"O, dearest Saviour, I adore thy mercies and thy incomparable love, expressed in thy so voluntary susception and affectionate suffering such horrid and sad tortures, which cannot be remembered without a sad compassion; the waters of bitterness entered into thy soul, and the storms of death, and thy Father's anger broke thee all in pieces: and what shall I do, who by my sins have so tormented my dearest Lord? What contrition can be great enough, what tears sufficiently expressive, what hatred and detestation of my crimes, can be equal and commensurate to those sad accidents which they have produced? Pity me, O, Lord; pity me, dearest God; turn thou thy merciful eyes towards me, O, most merciful Redeemer, for my sins are great, like unto thy passion; full of sorrow and shame, and a burden too great for me to bear. Lord, who hast done so much for me, now only speak the word, and thy servant shall be whole. Let thy wounds heal me, thy virtues

* Written by Jeremy Taylor.

amend me, thy death quicken me; that I, in this life, suffering the cross of a sad and solitary repentance, in the union and merits of thy cross and passion, may die with thee, and rest with thee, and rise again with thee, and live with thee forever, in the possession of thy glories, O, dearest Saviour Jesus. Amen."

CHAPTER V.

The immediate effect of CHRIST's death. His burial. His resurrection. Appearance to his disciples. Proofs of his resurrection satisfactory. The manner of his resurrection like that of his birth—in harmony with the whole of his life. Reasons of his appearance only to his followers. GOD's method of working.

CHRISTIANITY was centred in the person of Jesus. When he therefore was crucified, Christianity appeared to be extinguished. This was the feeling of the Jews, particularly of the Jewish Sanhedrim. This, too, was the feeling of Christ's own disciples. With one or two exceptions, "they all forsook him and fled." Stunned by the blow, they seemed to forget every thing he had said respecting his resurrection. It was an event of which they had no expectation. All their hopes of redemption to Israel were buried in his grave. They abandoned themselves to despair. Hence it is perfectly clear, that if Jesus had not risen, his claims would have been forgotten and despised by friends and foes. His disciples were men of humble station and narrow views. They possessed no influence in the community, no confidence even in themselves. Christ was their only hope. Without him they could do nothing. But he was dead and buried—and they shrunk away from observation. They yielded to the terrible conviction that their faith was a delusion, their hopes a dream.

Joseph of Arimathea, a man of distinction and wealth,

and "a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews," begged his body from the Roman procurator, and laid it in his own new tomb, cut out of the rock, in one of the inclosures not far from the place of the crucifixion. Actuated by natural reverence and affection, but with no definite expectation of any thing beyond, Joseph of Arimathea, assisted by Nicodemus, and others of the more wealthy but cautious and timid disciples of Jesus, performed the funeral rites over his body, wrapping it in fine linen, and anointing it with a mixture of costly spices and myrrh, "as the manner of the Jews is to bury"—and then reverently closed the tomb, and hurried to their homes. This was on the evening previous to the Sabbath, one of the high festival days of the Jewish Passover.

On the succeeding day, recollecting some vague rumors respecting his resurrection, the Jewish Council, afraid that his disciples might steal the body of Jesus, and pretend that he was risen from the dead, engaged Pilate to seal the sepulchre, and set over it a guard of Roman soldiers. None of his own disciples appear to have approached the sepulchre all of that day. They would be restrained from doing so, by the sanctity of the occasion, as that Sabbath was observed by the Jews with unusual strictness. Their fear of consequences, however, had induced the Jewish Council to go so far as to get Pilate to break the Sabbath, by the sealing of the sepulchre, and the appointment of a watch, but this was a matter of no consequence to them, as Pilate and his soldiers were heathen, and would not hesitate to violate a Jewish institution!

Among the Hebrews, the rites of embalming lasted forty days. Early in the morning, therefore, upon the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James and Salome, with Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, brought sweet spices to the sepulchre, that they might again embalm the body of Jesus. But who will remove for them the stone at the entrance of the sepulchre? This difficulty, however, does not prevent their approach—when, lo! they find the stone already removed, and the body of Jesus gone! But where was the seal affixed by the command of Pilate? Where, too, the guard of Roman soldiers, whose duty it was, on pain of death, according to the Roman law, to keep their post, and guard the sepulchre? They had fled; and the story they told was this, that the disciples of Jesus came by night and stole him away." Stole him! How did they know that? Why did they not prevent it? And why, moreover, were they not punished for deserting their post? The story is incredible and absurd, and the only reason that can be given for it, is the fact stated by the Evangelist, that they were hired by the Jewish Council to tell it, and screened from punishment by the intervention of the Council. But how preposterous the idea, that the disciples of Jesus stole his body, and pretended that he was risen from the dead! It implies a wonderful change in their feelings, and not only so, but in their character. For those timid and despairing disciples suddenly become bold and resolute, cunning and wicked. They frighten, by their very presence, a whole cohort of Roman soldiers, abstract the dead body of

Jesus—afterwards pretend that it was alive, and under the influence of this *conscious lie*, go forth to proclaim "peace on earth and good will to men," and submit to every form of privation and suffering, nay, to death itself, in attestation of their testimony!

But why dwell upon this? No sceptic, even, however purblind in other respects, can swallow such an absurdity. And hence we recur to the sacred narrative, so calm and honest, so simple and clear, for the true solution of the problem. At break of day, being the third from the time when our Saviour was buried, according to the Jewish mode of reckoning, just before the approach of the females who came to embalm the body, "there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it. And for fear of him the keepers did shake and became as dead men." Jesus had burst the barriers of the tomb. As he had yielded voluntarily to death, and in yielding to it, had actually conquered death, so he rose from the grave, by the might of his indwelling and immutable Spirit. It was impossible he should be holden of death, for he had entered its dark domain only to illumine it, and thence bring with him all his ransomed ones. Thus while the women were much perplexed by the manifest absence of his body from the open tomb, into whose dim chamber the light of a new-born day began to pour its beams, an angel, or angels, in shining garments, appeared to them, and said—the women meanwhile bowing themselves in fear and reverence, to the ground—"Why seek ye the living among the

dead? He is not here, but is risen; remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered unto the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. He is not here, he has risen, as he said; come see the place where the Lord lay." Returning from the sepulchre, such of the disciples as were within reach were informed of the resurrection, and they came to the sepulchre, and satisfied themselves of its reality. No marks of violence were seen in and about the sepulchre. The grave clothes were laid carefully aside, and it was clear that the resurrection of Christ had occurred, like his birth, without noise and tumult. The earth, indeed, trembled, but it was a trembling of joy, as if in sympathy with the gladness and triumph of the occasion. The keepers became pale with affright, and slunk away to their homes. But in and about the sepulchre itself, all was serene and beautiful, like the opening day, beginning to blush from the portals of the East. Jesus, radiant with glory, rose from the tomb, silent and majestic, just in the manner that we should imagine the Sun of Righteousness would ascend from the darkness of that dismal night into which he had voluntarily gone down.*

During forty days subsequent to the resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples, at first incredulous of his resurrection, and only to be assured of the fact by the most

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* Aurora lucis rutilit
Coelum laudibus intonat,
Mundus exultans jubilat
Gemens infernus ululat.—*Hymn—Paschal.*

clear and decisive proofs, bestowing upon them his blessings, conversing with them respecting the things of his kingdom, and giving directions as to their future conduct and destiny. What was the nature of our Saviour's body now, it is not for us to say, and is perhaps a subject of useless speculation. That it was a spiritual body, to some extent—a body controlled entirely by the higher nature within,—a body pure and perfect, vigorous and immortal—a body akin to that of glorified spirits, and moreover to be rendered still more radiant and glorious, cannot be doubted. Yet it was, in some sense, the body that was buried, and which retained to it some striking resemblance, for there were the marks of the nails, and of the spear, as if left on purpose to satisfy the sceptical, who, like Thomas, would not be convinced without such ocular and special demonstration.

Such were the mode and frequency of our Saviour's communications with his disciples, as to leave them without doubt as to the reality of his resurrection. It was not in visions they saw him. Not in the dim twilight, or the shadowy night—not in the solemn forest, or the leafy grove—not in haunted ruins, or whispering aisles, but in the broad light of day, in the presence of each other, in the house and by the way, in the place of prayer, and on the mountain top—not for a few moments, but for hours—not in seasons of secret devotion or of religious ecstacy, but in such scenes and circumstances as could not admit of deception or illusion. Neither was he seen by a few individuals only, but by the whole body of the disciples; first by

Mary Magdalene, then by the assembled eleven, then by the two disciples on their journey to Emmaus, then again by the eleven and Thomas; after that at the sea of Tiberias, by Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples: subsequently, by "all the brethren gathered together by his own appointment at a mountain in Galilee," by "five hundred brethren at once;" at another time by James; at another, when the apostles were at dinner, "upbraiding them with their unbelief;" and finally, at the end of forty days, when he led them out as far as Bethany, and ascended in their presence to Heaven.

The manner of our Saviour's resurrection was, in all probability, essentially different from that which existed in the preconceptions of his own disciples, if, indeed, they had any definite ideas on the subject. The Jews, as a people, expected a resurrection in connection with the Messiah's advent. He was to raise all the dead of Israel, and reign with them on earth—exalting both the living and the dead to the highest seats of power and splendor. But our Saviour ascended from the tomb without any visible display, in the hush of the morning, with none but angels to witness the event, and without the resurrection of a single individual of the myriads of the departed. The course of nature moved on as usual. A few humble souls only were made acquainted with the fact, and the whole world besides left in profound ignorance of its occurrence. He made his appearance not in the temple of Jerusalem, not in the synagogue of the Jews, not in the streets of the city, amid the

assembled multitudes, who kept holy-day during the Passover; but in the suburbs of the city, in a remote upper room, by the sea of Tiberias, and on a lone mountain of Galilee. Why was this? Why did he not proclaim his resurrection to the world? Why did he not convince the Sanhedrim and the people of the Jews, by appearing to them in his majesty, and flashing the light of Heaven in their eyes? If he had done so, it would have been inconsistent with his whole procedure, from his cradle to his grave. For he came "without observation," veiling his Godhead in forms of humility and suffering, attracting rather than forcing men to himself, gradually enlightening and transforming their minds, not overwhelming them with manifestations of omnipotence. Suppose he had appeared to the Jews after his resurrection, would they have believed him then? Would they have followed him to lowliness, to poverty and death? Would they have become his true disciples, taken up their cross, and borne it after him in humility and love? In a word, would they have been converted by such a manifestation of his glory? We have no reason to believe they would. Our Saviour knew better what was in man. Therefore did he appear to his own humble followers, and instructing them what to do, shed upon them and upon others his blessed and life-giving spirit, and thousands, even of his enemies, were born into his kingdom. God's method of working is ever silently, slowly, and unostentatiously. A handful of corn is sown upon the tops of the mountains, and by and by it shakes like Lebanon. Misty vapor is drawn from the bosom of the earth, suspended in

fleecy clouds above us, let down again in showers upon the ground; the streams run among the hills, gather themselves into rivers, and roll in majesty to the sea, where all are mingled in the mighty tides which encircle the globe. So here, Jesus appears to a few of his disciples, instructs and prepares them by a gentle but irresistible process for their work, sends them forth into the world, and the world hears that by his death and resurrection he has brought life and immortality to light. Hundreds, nay, thousands, everywhere, believe, repent, obey. Not by observation, not by pomp and display, above all, not by physical power or mechanical demonstrations of any kind, "but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." The kingdom comes—comes not as the kingdoms of earth, for it is invisible and divine. Nor does it ever pass away. While all earthly rule expires, and the very stars grow dim, the kingdom of Christ endureth forever.

CHAPTER VI.

CHRIST'S last interview with his Disciples. His Ascension. The completion of his mission. The relation of his life on earth, to his higher and more enduring life in Heaven. JESUS CHRIST, the true GOD and eternal Life. Prayer to CHRIST triumphant.

FORTY days from his resurrection, Jesus had assembled with his disciples in the city of Jerusalem, probably in that quiet upper room, in a remote and unfrequented part of the city, where they were accustomed to perform their devotions. It was on this occasion that he commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait there for the descent of the Holy Ghost, who should endow them with supernatural power for the discharge of their high functions as the first promulgators of Christianity. He showed them, moreover, how all things, which were written concerning him, in the Old Testament Scriptures, had been fulfilled, and what relation his death and resurrection bore to the redemption of the world. "Then opened he their understanding to understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high."

How long these conversations lasted, we are not informed, but that they produced a deep impression on the minds of the Apostles, cannot be doubted.

Early in the morning, even before the break of day, he set out with them through the yet silent streets of Jerusalem, into the neighboring country. He took the road to Bethany and the Mount of Olives, which he had so frequently travelled before, conversing, meanwhile, upon the things of his kingdom, and preparing their minds for his departure to Heaven. Bethany lay on the east side of the city, and just on the further ascent of the Mount of Olives. Here our Saviour had often lingered, in meditative mood, or in solemn communion with Heaven. Here, a few days before, he had gazed upon the devoted city, and wept over its melancholy doom. Not far from this, also, he had suffered his mysterious agony in the garden. And O! who can tell what were his emotions when he approached it, and from the brow of Olivet again looked back upon the scene of his crucifixion! It was during this walk from the city, and, in all probability, while he was slowly ascending the hill, and it may be, lingering to gaze upon Jerusalem, beginning to gleam faintly under the first rays of the morning, that he replied to that question of his Apostles, indicating so strikingly their yet imperfect views of his character and mission: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:

and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth." A few moments after, he added, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And, lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." At this point, we may imagine that they had gained the summit of the mountain, and while the soft light of the morning was reflected from his serene countenance, upturned, as we may naturally suppose, towards Heaven, in expectation of his ascension, "even while he was yet speaking, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight." This was done so suddenly, and yet so naturally and gently, that the disciples were by no means startled, but kept gazing upon his changing and ascending form, glorified, in all probability, as it was on the Mount of Transfiguration, "when his countenance did shine like the sun, and his raiment was white and glistering." He had ceased speaking while he ascended, and stretching forth his arms, he blessed them in parting. This was his attitude and manner of leaving the world. This was his last earthly look and aspect towards his disciples. "And he led them out," says Luke, "as far as Bethany; and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven." "A cloud," doubtless a radiant cloud, "received him out of their sight." They were transfixed with astonishment and delight. For their eyes were

opened to behold his glory. They understood the purport of his words, the design of his ascension. His spirit dropped upon them with his parting blessing. Hence, it is said, "they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." How evident from all this that our Saviour ascended slowly, through the still air, and that his disciples had a clear, unobstructed vision of his glory. As he parted from them, with his hands outstretched to bless them, they fell prostrate on the ground, in adoring wonder, and gazed upon his ascending form till it was received by a luminous cloud. Nay, sometime after the blessed vision was gone, they continued to gaze in the direction which it had taken, entranced with delight and awe, and, as it were, riveted to the spot.

"And while they looked steadfastly toward Heaven, as he went up, behold two men (angels in the form of men,) stood by them, in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven."

Such were the circumstances attending Christ's ascent to glory. Such the manner in which he left his disciples on Olivet. How touching and beautiful! How much in harmony with the genius of the Gospel, and with the whole course of our Saviour's life on earth!

> And when thou didst depart, no car of flame,
> To bear thee hence in lambent radiance came,

No visible angels mourned with drooping plumes;
Nor dids't thou mount on high
From fatal Calvary,
With all thine own redeemed outbursting from the tombs;
But thou dids't haste to meet
Thy mother's coming feet,
And bear the words of peace unto the faithful few:
Then calmly, slowly didst thou rise
Into thy native skies,
Thy human form dissolved on high,
In its own radiancy.

"You all know," says Tholuck, catching the spirit of this occasion, "of what inconceivable worth is the last look of a friend. As his countenance then appeared, that is the image which imprints itself most deeply on the soul. How delightful now it is to see the manner in which the last glance of Jesus fell upon his chosen. The earliest rays of the opening day shone through the clouds, and then, says the history, he lifted up his hands and blessed them, and a cloud received him out of their sight. Amid the shades of night he came, in the redness of the morning dawn he went away; ever, ever shalt thou stand before our souls, thou glorified Saviour, in the same attitude in which thou didst leave the world, with thy hands extended over thy chosen to bless them."

It is on this account, as well as on others of a still more impressive kind, that the disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing and praising God. "Wherever they stood, and wherever they went, those blessing hands were before their eyes. And do not we, beloved brethren, exclaim: O, that we had

been there! O, that we had been there, to see those blessing hands!"

Thus was our Saviour's mission on earth completed. It was meet, therefore, that he should ascend to heaven, where he was before; in other words, that he should pass from the outward and perishable, to the inward and immortal, and carry on, by higher and more spiritual means, the great work which he had only commenced. This was his coronation as King in Zion. Now he was invested with the dominion of the church. And now began that peaceful and triumphant reign which is yet to fill the whole earth with its glory. This was fully understood by his disciples, who were inspired with a new life. A few days after, the Spirit descended upon them, and endued them with divine power, so that they went forth, testifying every where, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Bold, resolute, commanding, they proclaimed, even in the scene of his crucifixion and shame, the thrilling fact of his glorification at the right-hand of the Father. Nay, more, they charged the guilt of his execution on the Council and people of the Jews, and affirmed, in the very halls of Justice, that Jesus of Nazareth was exalted a prince and a Saviour, to give redemption unto Israel, and the remission of sins. "These submissive, timid, and scattered followers of Jesus," says Milman, "thus burst upon the public attention, suddenly invested with courage, endowed with commanding eloquence, in the very scene of their Master's cruel apprehension and execution, asserting his Messiahship in a form as irreconcilable with their own pre-

conceived notions as with those of the rest of the people; arraigning the rulers, and by implication, if not as yet in distinct words, the whole nation, of the most heinous act of impiety as well as barbarity, the rejection of the Messiah; proclaiming the resurrection, and defying investigation. The whole speech of Peter clashed with the strongest prejudices of those who had so short a time before given such fearful evidence of their animosity and remorselessness. It proclaimed that "the last days," the days of the Messiah, the days of prophecy and wonder, had already begun. It placed the Being whom but forty days before they had seen helplessly expiring upon the cross, far above the pride, almost the idol of the nation, King David. The ashes of the king had long reposed in the tomb which was before their eyes; but the tomb could not confine Jesus; death had no power over his remains. Nor was his resurrection all: the crucified Jesus was now 'on the right-hand of God;' he had assumed that last, that highest distinction of the Messiah—the superhuman majesty; that intimate relation with the Deity, which, however vaguely and indistinctly shadowed out in the Jewish notion of the Messiah, was, as it were, the crowning glory, the ultimate height to which the devout hopes of the most strongly excited of the Jews followed up the promised Redeemer: 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both *Lord* and Christ!" '*

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* History of Christianity, p. 150.

At this point we discover the relation of our Saviour's life on earth, to his higher and more enduring life in heaven. His descent to the world, and his life of sorrow here, was but an episode in his existence, which is commensurate with eternity. Before Abraham, nay, more, before all time, he existed as "The Word of God," who was "in the beginning with God." He is "before all things, and by him all things consist," the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Hence, when he ascended up on high, he ascended "where he was before." He took possession of "the glory which he had before the world was." And so he lives for evermore. "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." His life, then, is that of God—a life original, uncreated, indestructible and eternal. In a word, he is LIFE ITSELF, and his human form but a means of manifesting, to our imperfect conceptions, his indwelling and everlasting Godhead. "What think ye of Christ? whose son is He? They say unto him, the Son of David. Why, then, doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right-hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." "And thou, Lord, in the beginning has laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou endurest. Yea, all of them shall wax old as doth a garment. But thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and

priests unto God and his Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever! Amen. Behold! He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him. Even so, Amen! I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

Adorable and ever blessed Saviour! Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us! By thine agony and death, by thy resurrection and ascension to the right-hand of the Majesty on high; by thine infinite love and pity, by thine eternal majesty and perfection, have mercy upon us! Reveal to us thy glory, and make us partakers of thy fullness. Shine, thou Sun of Righteousness into the darkness of our souls, and transform us into thine image. Thou art the Light and Life of the world! Thou art love eternal! All angels adore thee! The spirits of just men made perfect praise thee! All saints bless thee! Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Thou art all our salvation and all our desire! Whom have we in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth we desire beside thee! Our heart and our flesh fainteth and faileth; but thou art the strength of our heart and our portion forever, Amen!

"O, thou who art our life,
Be with us through the strife,
Thy own meek head with rudest storms was bowed;
Raise thou our eyes above,
To see a Father's love,
Beam like a bow of promise through the cloud.

Even through the awful gloom,
Which hovers o'er the tomb,
That light of love our guiding star shall be
Our spirits shall not dread
The shadowy way to tread,
Friend, guardian, Saviour, which doth lead to thee."

PART SECOND.

THE CHARACTER AND MISSION OF CHRIST.

CHAPTER I.

SINLESSNESS OR MORAL PERFECTION OF CHRIST.

We have briefly glanced at the salient points in our Saviour's Life, considering it chiefly in its historical connection. A full and accurate portrait we could not draw. Indeed, such a thing were impossible. One might as well attempt, as a thoughtful German suggests, to paint the sun with charcoal! All that we intended was a brief outline, which might furnish a basis for a fuller and more precise discussion of those great doctrines touching the Character and Work of Christ, which lie at the foundation of the Christian system, and constitute the life of every believing soul.

In the first place, we propose to inquire whether, even as a man, Jesus Christ was not absolutely sinless, or perfect, using the term in its widest signification; and whether his character, in this respect, was not entirely diverse from any that ever existed among men. The character of Christ, indeed, is eminently natural; that is, it is simple, spontaneous and consistent, such as becomes a true and perfect man. Yet it is wholly supernatural, on account of its entire free-

dom from sin, from positive transgression, imperfection and inadequacy of every sort, and in being ennobled and beautified by the loftiest virtues.

Sin, in its essential character, to use the definition of Gregory of Nyssa, the best we have seen, is "estrangement from God, who is the true and only Life,"—a definition well agreeing with the striking words of Chrysostom, who says, "He that sins is far from God, not in place, but in disposition."* It throws little light upon the absolute nature of sin to say, that it is "a transgression of the law," "a violation of the principles of our moral being," or that it is "inadequacy, perversion or disorder of the soul, in relation to the great standard of righteousness." For these definitions, or rather descriptions, good enough so far as they go, are not intended to exhaust the subject, and have reference only to the results of sin, which is a cause, as well as an effect, a state as well as an action. Sin, as an expression of character, or as an overt act, is doubtless "a transgression of the law;" but as a state or disposition of the soul, an element or principle of the life, it is more than this. It lies in the very centre of our being, which is tainted or perverted in some way before it can transgress the law. The author of the definition in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism nearly touched the real essence of the thing, when he said "sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God;" but this is too vague and inadequate. Ullmann goes no farther, when affirming

* Quoted in Suicer's Thesaurus, and re-quoted by Ullmann.

sin to be "the deviation of a free nature from the moral law of God; the disagreement of the moral life, that is, the intentions, the general aim of the will, or a single act of the will, and the outward deeds with the divine law."* Such descriptions, accurate enough as descriptions, touch only the surface of the subject, and leave its real nature or essence in profound obscurity.

The soul sustains its highest and most intimate relations to God. So long as it abides in him, it cannot sin. Love and purity are the necessary elements of its being. It goes, therefore, into the very essence of the matter, to say that sin is the estrangement or deviation, in act or disposition, of a free moral nature from God,—estrangement, more or less complete, from the Being, who is himself the law of the moral universe, and the very foundation of the soul's life; in a word, the alienation of a free and deathless spirit from its centre and its end. God is the root of being and of well-being. He is the law of laws, the sum and centre of all spiritual life. To know and love God supremely, in other words, to be united to God, as heart to heart, and spirit to spirit, and thence to live in him, and by him, and for him, constantly and forever, is to be sinless and perfect. Then the finite blends with the infinite, and all error, incompleteness and imperfection are excluded. The soul, escaping "the pollution that is in the world through lust," is a partaker of the Divine nature, and lives in conscious and everlasting harmony with the good and the true. So

* "Sinlessness of Christ," by Dr. Ullmann of Heidelberg. See "German Selections," by Edwards and Park.

long, however, as the union is not complete, so long as it is disturbed by estrangement or deviation of any kind, whether occasional or permanent, there is imperfection and sin. Hence, at present, good, yet imperfect, men are only rising towards it. Their union to God, as a permanent thing, is not in all respects complete. But they will finally reach it. Even now, they may be said, for the moment, to be sinless or perfect, at least in a partial sense, whenever they truly live in God, and do his will. But with defective natures, they are liable to fall from this elevation, losing even the sense of the infinite, and consequently falling into sin, to the sad injury of their regenerated souls. But returning to God, as the magnetic needle to the pole, tending evermore towards infinite love and purity, they are destined at last to the attainment of a complete harmony with God. Then will their love, purity and happiness be spontaneous and immutable.

Now, it is in this high sense that we maintain the absolute sinlessness, or perfection, of Jesus Christ; and that, too, in the merely human aspect of his character. As a man, as a teacher, as a prophet, as a friend, brother, and citizen of the world—above all, as a redeemer and a guide, he lived in God. The human blended with the Divine—was guided and controlled by the Divine. Exposed to the most terrible tests, there was no disturbance here; no alienation or estrangement. The harmony was complete, changeless, and eternal. Jesus was holy as God is holy. His whole being and life—thought, feeling, purpose, and action—were one with God. He never thought wrong, never

felt wrong, never did wrong. Not only so, but he possessed all positive virtue, being "full of grace and truth." Love, purity, and devotion, constituted his life; in other words, were as inseparably blended in his life, as the colors are blended in the rainbow. As God is love, so was he love. As God is justice, so was he justice. As God lives to do good, so he lived to do good. Goodness, absolute and changeless, was his being's end and aim. His inward and outward life were equal and harmonious. The word corresponded to the idea, the action to the feeling, the end to the purpose, and all were holy.

This is the uniform testimony of his followers; this is the actual fact in his history. It is proved by innumerable confluent evidences. His character was perfect as a whole —perfect in all its details. It was based in God, began in God, and ended in God: so that his whole existence was the mirror of the Divine. There we behold, as in a glass, the glory of God.

A character like this is a great moral miracle; such as earth, since the fall, saw never; such as the Deity alone could produce. It transcends, as a miracle, the creation of the world, or the resurrection of the dead. The very idea of such a character, is the most august and thrilling that has dawned upon the world. "It is an idea for which," as a devout and learned theologian has remarked, "one might consent to be branded and broken on the wheel." Jesus Christ, even as a man, stands at the head of a new moral creation. He is the model and representative of a glorified race. For, as "we have borne the

image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

But to the proof. What, in the first place, is the testimony of his followers; of those, especially, who drew his portrait from the life? They ascribe to him the highest attributes of character—and that, too, in the most perfect combination—dignity, piety, purity, self-sacrifice; the most amazing grandeur and comprehensiveness of view, with the greatest tenderness, delicacy, and generosity of impulse. Severe and lofty, yet serene and self-possessed; full of intensest zeal and strongest energy, yet kind, forbearing, and merciful; they represent him going forth to do the will of God, with all the vigor of an angel, with all the gentleness of a child. He speaks, and it is done; yet he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. He acts from the purest, most disinterested love; he lives for the noblest, most generous ends. Rooted in God, living in God, he labors, he suffers, he dies for man. In vastness of thought, in originality and beauty of conception, in purity of feeling and grandeur of aim, in his aspirations after an infinite and unknown good, especially in disinterestedness, and enlightened devotion, the character of Christ transcends all human excellence. There is a depth and vastness in his love, which may be strictly styled unfathomable. He shows a severity and loftiness of principle, which all the powers of earth and hell cannot over-master. There seems a might within him, which more than counter-balances all external pressure and trial. He cherishes a piety which swells into a transport, calm as heaven, yet boundless as

eternity. In a word, he lives in the infinite, and spreads around him the influence of an unlimited good, an immeasurable joy.

> "From heaven he came, of heaven he spoke,
> To heaven he led his followers' way;
> Dark, gloomy clouds of night he broke,
> Unveiling an immortal day."

This is the testimony, this is the portrait left us by his disciples. They do not, in so many words, call him perfect; but they certainly mean it, when they speak of his *glory*. The influence of his character upon their minds was overpowering. It enveloped them like an atmosphere of light. They see nothing else, feel nothing else; and hence, in due time, they reflect his image, not only in their writings, but in their lives and actions. They conform their dispositions and aims entirely to his; so that the term, *Christ-like*, describes, with the utmost precision, their character and life. Not only do they yield to his moral influence, but they live and die to vindicate his innocence, to proclaim his glory. One of them, indeed, betrays him; but this is the obvious result of long-cherished and overpowering selfishness, grown malignant in the presence of contrasted purity and love. Nor has Judas any secrets to tell, any charges to prefer, any complaints to make. He can say nothing, in the slightest degree, derogatory to the greatness or goodness of Jesus. He confesses that he has "betrayed innocent blood," and goaded by infinite remorse, he commits suicide, in proof and illustration of what our Saviour had said, that "it were better for that man if he had never been

born." Pilate, also, confesses that he "finds no fault in him;" the wife of Pilate, haunted by horrible dreams on his account, vindicates his innocence; and the Jews are compelled to seek his death by false charges and illegal proceedings.

John the Baptist, confessedly one of the greatest of the prophets, speaks of himself as unworthy to stoop down and unloose the sandals of Jesus. "We believe," says one of them, speaking the sentiments of all the rest, "that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." "Did not our hearts burn within us," exclaim the two disciples who had walked with him to Emmaus, "did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened unto us the Scriptures?" "Lord, if thou hadst been here," is the touching remark of Martha and her sister Mary, expressing their confidence in the goodness as well as the power of Jesus, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." "Rabbi," says Nathanael, when Christ has given a proof of his wondrous knowledge, "thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel." "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" exclaimed Simon Peter, when he had witnessed a manifestation of his all-controlling power. "And ye know," says the beloved disciple, "that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin." "This was a righteous man"—"this was the Son of God"—is the testimony of the Roman centurion, as he gazes upon the cross; and Thomas, in rapt admiration and adoring reverence, cries out, "My Lord, and my God!" "We beheld his glory," say they all, "the

glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth!"

So far as we are capable of judging, the influence which our Saviour exerted over his early followers, was of the purest and most ennobling kind. It inspired them with a new life. It gave them other views, affections, and hopes. It brought them into the sphere of the infinite. It made their hearts, their lives "sublime." Quickening and expanding their intellects, it supplied them with boundless energy and zeal, impelling them to the moral conquest of the world. It was as if the voice of the Almighty had caused streams to break out in the wilderness, and floods in the desert, spreading everywhere, amid sands and rocks, verdure and flowers. Most of the Apostles and early disciples of Christ were illiterate men, with narrow views, selfish purposes, undisciplined minds. They belonged to a dark, fanatical age, and were themselves dark and fanatical. Jews in creed, feeling and aim, they possessed none of that enlargement, serenity, purity and benevolence, which shone so conspicuous in Christ. Occupied with their daily toils, as fishermen, tax-gatherers, or tent makers, they had little time, and probably less inclination for profound thought and far-reaching benevolence. The idea of God as the universal Father, and of a religion wide as the world, all-transforming and all-embracing, had never dawned upon their minds. They knew little of man, little of God, and still less of themselves. In a word, they were Jews, good enough in their way, with some religion, some superstition and much bigotry, but as incapable of origi-

nating and sustaining a system of faith and morals, comprehensive and beautiful, like that of Christianity, as a company of Hottentots to sculpture the Apollo, or construct the Parthenon. Those of them who possessed a more active temperament, or a little more learning than the others, as for example, Saul of Tarsus, were yet Jews, in creed and in feeling, bitterly hostile to the cause of the humble Nazarene, and little prepared for the sacrifices and toils of a divine and self-denying faith. The Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, supply us with conclusive evidence that they were as little fit, originally, as men ever were, for the conception of a lofty and benevolent enterprise. That they did not understand even the spirit and purport of the Old Testament, we have conclusive proof. We have equal evidence that they long resisted the peculiar views of Jesus. The idea, then, of Strauss and others, that they spontaneously originated a religious system so pure, so powerful as that of Christianity, is utterly preposterous.* Admitting, even, for the sake of argument, that

* To state Strauss' Views of the Life of Christ, and the Establishment of Christianity, is to refute them. The following is a brief but fair synopsis of his work entitled, *Leben Jesu*: "Jesus was a native of Nazareth, the son of Joseph and Mary; the entire account of his birth in Bethlehem, with all its circumstances of danger and of miracle, belongs to that class of myths which proceed from the popular desire of glorifying the early life of distinguished men. Some exhibition of uncommon intelligence in childhood may have given rise to the story of his sojourn in the temple, when twelve years old, though this is doubtful. He probably had some instructions from the Essenes, or from the Rabbins, and intelligent persons whom he met at the feasts at Jerusalem. At about thirty years of age, he became a follower of John the Baptist, who appears to have belonged to the ascetic sect of the Essenes, and to have proclaimed the popular idea, very natural among an oppressed people, that the great national deliverer was at hand. Jesus probably remained a follower of John much longer than the partiality of tradition would allow us to believe. At length he began to preach—at first the same doctrine with the Baptist, that the Messiah was soon to appear. Gradually,

it was baseless, its conception must have been one of the last efforts of piety, genius and virtue. Adopted throughout the world, simply in its essential principles, it would work the transformation of the race. It would extinguish all selfishness, all oppression and war. Enthroning God, the infinite and the immortal in every soul, in every State, it would form the whole world into one holy, happy brotherhood.

But these feeble, illiterate, narrow-minded Jews, were transformed into lofty, noble-hearted men, whose love and charity filled the earth with the fragrance of Heaven, and caused the wilderness and the solitary place to bud and blossom as the rose. Missionaries and martyrs, they lived and died in holy love and triumph; and have left behind them, to say the least, the purest, strongest, divinest faith that ever blessed the race. All will admit that they possessed an energy, a wisdom, and a zeal, the most wonderful, and that they succeeded in planting "the Religion of love and sorrow" upon the ruins of heathenism.

But all their excellence and all their success, they ascribe to Christ. They glory only in his cross. How

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as he became conscious of his own extraordinary powers, the idea occurred to him that he was destined to fill that office. His conception of the Messiahship, which, at first, may have been similar to that entertained by the people at large, rose with his increasing experience, until, applying to himself the prophecies of the Old Testament, which speaks of the Son of God as suffering, he was convinced that a violent death, which the malice and power of his enemies rendered probable, was a part of his great mission. Having exercised the office of a teacher of virtue and the reprover of hypocrisy, he was at length put to death. He did not rise again, but the excited imaginations of his followers presented his form in visions; a report spread of his resurrection, which was believed among his followers, and contributed chiefly to the success of his religion." To believe such a theory requires an amount of *credulity* which rarely falls to the lot of man. Poor Strauss!

august, how beautiful and commanding must that character have been which produced an effect so vast, so glorious and permanent.

Moreover, Jesus was surrounded by keen-sighted and powerful enemies, who watched his words with zealous and eager animosity. These, again, were succeeded by others of a similar disposition, who turned the weight of their resources against the infant cause of Christianity. What charges then do they bring against the moral character of Christ? Do they find fault with his conduct and spirit simply as a man? Do they charge him with any crimes, nay, with the slightest immoralities? Do they furnish documents and facts to prove that he was revengeful, proud, worldly, ambitious, licentious, or even, in the slightest degree, selfish? They say much of his being an impostor, an enthusiast, a madman. They tell us of his heresies, his blasphemies, his innovations. But it was by these he purified and enlarged the system of morals, revealed the paternal character of God, shed new light upon the immortality of the soul, extinguished the superstition and hypocrisy of his age, extended faith to the Gentiles, and inspired millions of idolaters with the fear and love of the true and living God.

We have four independent narratives of the life of Christ, so plain, so simple, so artless, so unimpassioned and honest, that no one can doubt their authenticity. From this source we learn how purely he lived, how gloriously he died; what lofty and comprehensive truths he taught, what divine precepts he enjoined, and what beneficial changes he effected.

When we turn, therefore, to the testimony of his adversaries, we find that it only corroborates the evangelical narrative, and proves the purity and elevation of our Saviour's character.

Many sceptics have themselves been struck with the moral grandeur of the character of Christ. While opposing his claims, as "a teacher sent from God," they have been compelled to do him honor as a model of perfection. There is no passage in all the writings of Rousseau more striking and beautiful than that in which he admits the infinite superiority of Jesus to Socrates, and expresses the conviction that Jesus Christ cannot be an impostor; and that, supposing his life to be a fabrication, which he thinks impossible, the inventor must be deemed a greater man than the hero. "The Gospel," says Bolingbroke, "as it came from the hands of its author, is one continued lesson of the strictest morality, of justice, of benevolence, and charity." The philosophical sceptics of France and Germany are making the life and character of Christ the subject of their profoundest study. The wisest and most far-sighted politicians, as well as the most learned historians and critics, admit that his religion is the most powerful instrument of civilization, as well as the most perfect rule of conduct.* It easily blends with all improvements in science and morals. It advances with the age—nay, more, it ever transcends the age, going before it like the pillar of cloud

* See Stowe's Report on Common Schools in Germany. Cousin's Report on the same subject. See also Coleridge's "Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit."

by day, and the pillar of fire by night, before Israel in the wilderness. "The character of Christ," says Channing, "though delineated in an age of great moral darkness, has stood the scrutiny of ages; and in proportion as men's moral sentiments have been refined, its beauty has been more seen and felt." "Since the introduction of Christianity," he adds, "human nature has made great progress, and society experienced great changes; and in this advanced condition of the world, instead of losing its application and importance, it is found to be more and more congenial, and adapted to man's nature and wants. Men have outgrown the other institutions of that period when Christianity appeared, its philosophy, its modes of warfare, its policy, its public and private economy; but Christianity has never shrunk as intellect has opened, but has always kept in advance of men's faculties, and unfolded nobler views in proportion as they have ascended. The highest powers and affections which our nature has developed, find more than adequate objects in this religion. Christianity, indeed, is peculiarly fitted to the more improved stages of society, to the more delicate sensibilities of refined minds, and especially to that dissatisfaction with the present state, which always grows with the growth of our moral powers and affections. * * This fitness of our religion to more advanced stages of society than that in which it was introduced, to wants of human nature not then developed, seems to me very striking. The religion bears the mark of having come from a being who perfectly understood the human mind, and had power to provide for its progress. This

feature of Christianity is of the nature of prophecy. It was an anticipation of future and distant ages."* But the religion of Christ is only a development of his character. It is his heart embodied in doctrines and forms. How transcendent that excellence which has gained such universal homage, secured such beneficent and comprehensive results!

Whatever were the claims of his higher nature, all will admit that Jesus Christ was a true representative of man. His humanity, apart from all other considerations, was as perfect as can be conceived. How pure and beautiful his affection for his mother and his friends! What endearing ties bound him to his disciples, especially to "the beloved disciple," the spiritual, ethereal, contemplative John! How intensely he felt for man, not simply for his countrymen—and certainly he loved them well—but for man! In this respect, he is the most perfect type of what man ought to be; for his love was individual and patriotic, yet all-pervading and universal, like the fountains of the primeval Eden, which blessed the fair landscape with their beauty and freshness, yet broke into mighty rivers which enriched the entire "orient," and rolled, in gladness and fruitfulness, to distant seas. How superior to all external circumstances, to all selfish, all worldly considerations! How serene in his lofty simplicity!—how tender and attractive in his all-conquering love! How profoundly interested in humanity, as a living, suffering, hoping, immortal existence! How completely identified with all its permanent interests! How

* Channing's Works, Fourth Edition, Vol. I., p. 356–7.

deeply engaged for the poor, the outcast and sorrowful! Instead of courting the favor of the rich, and attempting to reform the higher walks of life—ever a vain endeavor, so long as the heaving masses below are putrefying with spiritual disease—he went down into the very depths of ignorance and vice, entering the lanes, the highways and hedges of our common misery, to gather the outcasts of Israel, and raise them to glory.

The perfection of Christ's humanity was evinced in his temperate use of earthly enjoyments. Thus, while far removed from the luxuries of the world, and living a spiritual, self-sacrificing life, he was no ascetic. Nothing rough and sour attached to his self-denial, nothing sensual or groveling to his enjoyment. He mingled with ease and gracefulness among his fellow-men; he ate and drank, he talked and acted, he slept and awaked, just like other men; and yet he appeared as a pure spirit, living alone in the world—a being rather of the past and the future, than of the present—one that belonged more to heaven than to earth, to eternity than to time—one that was in the world, and yet out of it—one that was finite, and yet infinite—one that was human, and yet divine;—like a star in the depths of ether, far off and mysterious, yet blessing the earth with its gentle, never-failing radiance. How frequent, how earnest and long-protracted his devout communings in the grand and solitary haunts of nature! How utterly absorbed, and, so to speak, lost in God—in the infinite and eternal! Yet he loved the face of nature, and the face of man. His wanderings by the sea of Galilee, in the garden of Olivet,

and in the deep, old wilderness, prove that he held fellowship with nature. It seemed, indeed, a part of himself. The beauty and serenity of his character are never so beautiful or serene, as when seen embosomed in the country. There, like Fenelon, he found "God's peace," blending, as it were, with the boundless and beautiful. His metaphors and apologues, his allusions and illustrations, drawn from the natural aspects of creation, all corroborate this view. How much, also, he seemed interested in little children; as if, somehow, they seemed to belong to heaven. Types of innocence and purity, he loved to look upon the little prattlers, to take them in his arms and bless them. "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Yet he had a vast and painful work before him, for the redemption of the world—a work, upon which he was accustomed to dwell with intense, all-consuming interest; as if a man, wandering through some fair landscape, with the music of birds and falling fountains in his ears, should yet behold in the distance, darkly marked against the clear sky, the scaffold and the block prepared for his execution. "I have a baptism, (a baptism of blood and agony,) to be baptized with, and how am I straightened till it is accomplished!"

Our Saviour was sometimes stern, but he was mainly gentle. Had he lacked the first of these qualities, he would have wanted an essential element of true greatness. That feeble sentimentalism, the product of sickly romance or of morbid enthusiasm, which extinguishes the sterner virtues, and forbids us to rebuke all meanness and wrong-

doing, which breaks down all decision of character, and makes endurance the only virtue worthy of cultivation, is opposed to the spirit of a pure and elevated religion. Thus, while our Saviour was meek and lowly of heart, while he would not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, he denounced, in language of fire, the pride, the hypocrisy, and the rapacity of the Pharisees, and with stern rebuke drove out the impious wretches who profaned his Father's house. We are not, indeed, to suppose, as some have erroneously done, that he applied the scourge of small cords to the mercenary dealers. That were an act inconsistent with his majestic bearing as the Son of God. He merely assumed this instrument of punishment as a symbol of authority, and had only to appear as the representative of the Father, among the multitude who thronged the temple with their vile traffic, and in that awful tone, which reminded the people of the voice of God, to command their departure. Terror-stricken with his majestic presence, and impelled by sudden and deeply startled feeling, they would give way before him, as the waves yield to the might of the storm. It would then be natural and proper for him to cause the tables of the money-changers to be overturned, and explain the whole by saying, "My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." It is on this principle, also, we are to explain his conduct with reference to the destruction of the herds of swine, in the country of the Gadarenes. If the owners were Jews, they were guilty of a breach of the law; if Gentiles, of tempting the Jews to sin; and it was there-

fore meet to punish their avarice, and to do so in such a manner as to produce a deep moral impression.

It has been thought by some persons incapable of thinking justly, far less profoundly, upon the subject, that our Saviour evinced some degree of anger, if not of petulance, when he cursed the barren fig-tree. Never was a greater mistake. That was obviously a symbolical action, intended to teach a most impressive lesson, a lesson which it has taught for eighteen centuries, and which it will continue to teach till the end of time. Never was an action more calmly or more deliberately done, and none was better fitted to impress upon the minds of all, the overcoming power of faith, and the momentous distinction between the form of godliness and the power thereof.

But the gentleness and self-sacrificing generosity of Christ are obviously the most distinguishing traits in his character; and these have impressed themselves the most strongly upon thoughtful and pure minded men. Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor. Indeed, he never acted on his own behalf. He lived for others, not for himself. Property he had none, fame none, rest none, joy none, except the sublime one of doing good. He gave himself a sacrifice for the world. Nay, he died for the redemption of those who cried out, *Crucify him! crucify him!* In a word, he laid himself a victim on the altar of benevolence, and was consumed in the flames of his own love.

The striking contrasts in our Saviour's character, some of which we have noticed, are among the most convincing

proofs of its perfection. It was a combination of qualities not easily reconciled, which are rarely, if ever found in the same person; which seem, in fact, incongruous, being made up of opposites, but so blended and adjusted, like the different colors which compose the sunlight, as to constitute perfect moral beauty. Here we discover an unparalleled dignity and sense of greatness, with a humility and condescension transcending any thing found among mortals; a complete superiority to the world and its pleasures, with the most perfect sympathy in man, and in all pertaining to man; an intense indignation against sin, with compassion for the sinner; the widest philanthropy with the tenderest friendship; the gratitude and submission of a son, with the power and authority of a king; the patience and forgiveness of a martyr, with the grandeur and supremacy of a God. Never man lived,—never man died like this man!

But we are to prove that Jesus was *absolutely sinless.* By this we do not mean to affirm that he was free from all temptation to sin, or that he was destitute of those natural susceptibilities, which, if not controlled by a higher nature, ever lead to sin; for we are expressly informed in the Scripture, that he "was made in all things like as we are," nay, that he was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." His nature was human, even if united with the Divine, in the proper sense of the term, and thence he possessed all those susceptibilities which, when unduly excited, ever lead to sin. Thus he was capable of temptation, at least from without. But he never sinned; that is to say, he uniformly overcame temptation. He was sinless

in the sense of being free from all transgression, either in thought, feeling and action, and in having all his powers and susceptibilities in due proportion and harmony; the superior having a complete and constant mastery, the inferior being kept in due and permanent subjection.

Further, he was not only sinless in the sense of being free from all transgression, internal or external, but in possessing all positive goodness and virtue. "It pleased the Father that in him should all *fullness*, (πλερῶμα, completeness, perfection,) dwell." His nature was embodied wisdom, purity and love. Heaven lay mirrored in his soul.

Upon this point we have the express testimony of the Apostles. They speak of him in a special and most significant sense, as, *the Holy One of God*, as *that just One*, as *righteous*, nay as *righteousness itself*, as *the very source of righteousness*, as the *High Priest offering sacrifice for others*, but not *for himself;* as the spotless *Lamb of God;* as made *sin*, but not *sinful;* as *having* no *guile;* as a *perfect example to be followed;* as *holy*, *harmless*, *undefiled*, and *separate* from sinners; as the *light of the world;* as *the way*, *the truth*, and *the life;* as the *divine Word;* as made unto us *wisdom*, *righteousness*, *sanctification* and *redemption;* as endued with the *spirit above measure;* as *possessed of all the fullness of God;* as *the image of the invisible God;* as *the brightness of the Father's glory* and the *express* (exact) *image of his person*, (nature.)*

* Acts, iii. 14—1 Pet. iii. 18—1 John, ii. 1—Heb. vii. 27—1 Pet. i. 19—2 Cor. v. 21—1 Pet. ii. 22, v. 21—Heb. vii. 26—Luke, ii. 32—John, i. 9—John, xiv. 6—John, i. 1—1 Cor. i. 30—John, iii. 34—Col. ii. 9—2 Cor. iv. 4—Heb. i. 3.

If Christ had not been sinless, as a High-Priest it would have been necessary for him to offer sacrifice, and make atonement for himself; in which case he would have possessed no official superiority to the priests of the Old Testament dispensation. On this supposition, also, "his death is vain, we are yet in our sins." This is the reasoning of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews. "For such an High-Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, who needeth not daily, as those High-Priests, to offer up sacrifice; for this he did once when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men High-Priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son (without infirmity,) who is consecrated for evermore."*

But it was not, as Ullmann has well remarked, merely from the dogmatical point of view, that the Apostles asserted the sinlessness of Christ. They did not deduce this as an inference from his official relations as the Messiah. "Their conviction rested upon a thorough knowledge of his life. They did not model the life of Jesus according to their own ideas, but their own ideas were by degrees modeled according to the instructions and life of Jesus."

The Gospel narrative is an artless copy of a divine model, upon whose glorious features its authors had gazed with such intense and devout admiration, as to be capable of delineating it with perfect accuracy. On this account the

* Heb. vii. 26, 27, 28.

Gospel narrative cannot be an ideal fiction. It were an absurdity in the nature of things to suppose it such; for in this case we should have an effect without a cause, a copy without an original.

The religion of Christ, to quote the words of a great actor, if not of a great thinker, "is a self-existent mystery."* There is in it a deep peculiarity of character proceeding from a source not human. Jesus borrowed nothing from philosophy. His system is entirely original. Indeed it can scarcely be called a system. It is a life, an act, or series of acts—a drama, divine and wonderful. Only in himself is it completely revealed. Here, rather than in his words, is it perfectly taught. Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle founded systems, very splendid and imposing, but unsubstantial, which have passed away. Indeed, all human speculations are fated to destruction. All human knowledge will vanish. But Jesus created a life, and that, too, by means of death—a life serene, beautiful and godlike, a life indestructible and omnipotent, and which is just beginning to develop its heaven-born energies. Philosophy has attempted to found an empire by syllogisms; politics by means of force; but such empires are ever crumbling and passing away. Jesus has founded an empire of love, an empire of purity and virtue, righteousness and peace. That empire is gaining ground. It counts its subjects by millions. It will yet envelope the globe.

Jesus Christ is himself a religion. His life illustrates his

* Napoleon.

ethics, his ethics illustrate his life. His law is perfect, so is his example. They are one. And as this is the only perfect system of morals, Jesus is the only perfect man.

All feel that Jesus was humble, pre-eminently so. His disciples tell us that "he made himself of no reputation," that he was "meek and lowly in heart," and we find his entire conduct corresponding with this idea. But he claims a perfect oneness with God. He tells us that, "he that hath seen him hath seen the father;" that "he was in the Father and the Father in him;" expressions indicating, at least, a profound consciousness, on his part, of complete moral harmony with God. He claims a purity, a perfection, an authority which can belong only to a sinless being; and Jehovah authenticates the claim by stupendous miracles. "This is my beloved Son," is the testimony of the Father, "in whom I am well pleased!"

Could our Saviour assume what did not clearly belong to him; or could he imagine himself in the possession of a purity to which he had no claim?* His meekness, his humility, his perfect mastery of himself, his intimate knowledge of man, his clear comprehension of all moral truth, his intimate fellowship with his Father, his disinterestedness, and self-sacrifice, utterly forbid the supposition. Thus, then, we have his own express affirmation, the testimony of his followers, the testimony even of his enemies, the witness of the Word, and the witness of the Spirit, that he was absolutely *sinless* and *perfect*.

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* "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" is his own sublime appeal to the Jews.

But we ought to look chiefly at the essential elements of our Saviour's character, which lie in the depths of the soul, in the thoughts, volitions, impulses and aims of his spiritual and immortal nature. What do we see there? Only the pure, the disinterested, the self-sacrificing, the infinite; in other words, perfect holiness, perfect devotion, perfect love. Hence, "for the joy set before Him," the joy of gratified benevolence, he conquered all evil, conquered all death. His whole nature is love, infinite as God, boundless as eternity. His whole heart is love, free, spontaneous and universal. His whole life is love, active, measureless, immortal. In a word, Christ is love, as God is love. God is perfect,—Christ is perfect. God and Christ are one.

CHAPTER II.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

In our discussion of the sinlessness of Christ, we have considered him chiefly as a man, as the representative and model of a new spiritual race. Christ, indeed, may be regarded as the Divine idea of a man. But so great, so absolute is his sinlessness or perfection, that it seems to border on that of Divinity itself, nay, imperceptibly to pass into it, as the early dawn passes into the radiance of advancing day. Nor is this unnatural. For as the good man lives in God, and thence derives his virtue, so God may live in the good man, and produce the same result. Perfect holiness would be the necessary effect of a Divine incarnation. To say the least, the character of Christ, even in its human aspect, suggests that of the Divine, and might, therefore, be made the vehicle of a peculiarly direct and vivid manifestation of the Godhead. It would surprise no thoughtful person, we think, if the Deity should, by a closer tie than exists between himself and all the works or creatures of his hand, unite his glory with this high form, and through the man Jesus Christ, reveal to the world his boundless love and power. Here, then, we ascend to a higher point of view, and maintain that Jesus Christ, while a man, possesses another nature, a higher and more perfect

life, a more august and wonderful perfection. He is not only *the Son of Man*, but he is also *the Son of God*, and that, too, in the loftiest sense of the expression.* So that we recognize him by "a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess. He is not only the representative of *humanity*, but the representative also of *Divinity;* and in this relation, exhibits not only all the attributes of perfect *manhood*, but those also of perfect *Godhead.* Spiritually and morally," to quote the felicitous language of Ullmann, "Jesus is an image of God, the resplendence of the Majesty on high, the expression of the Divine nature within the restrictions of a human life."† He is such in a higher sense than any man or angel, however exalted; for he is "above all"—"before all"—and by him "all things consist;" he is not simply "the Word" the *Revealer* of God, but God himself. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."‡

* The mere application to Christ of the term "Son of God," would not of itself prove his divinity. But the New Testament in many places represents him as the only Son of God, and in a sense so high and exclusive, as to involve the possession of a divine nature. As the Son, he participates in the essence and attributes of the Father, and receives the same homage and worship. Even Dr. Channing (Life, Vol. i. p. 298,) says, "Jesus Christ is the Son of God, in a peculiar sense—the temple of the Divinity—the brightest image of his glory. In seeing him we see the Father."

† "German Selections," p. 413.

‡ John, i. 1. For the import of the term Logos, *Word* or Reason, in its application to Christ, see Knapp's Theology, p. 136. In Plato the term signifies the reason of a thing, in distinction from its essence, that indeed by which its essence reveals itself. He applies it to the *Nous* or *Understanding*, which may be called the self-revelation of God, the second person in the Platonic Trinity, whom Plato represents as begotten of God, and as the Creator of the worlds. See Dr. Lewis' "Platonic Theology," p. 195. Cudworth's "Intellectual System," Vol. i. pp. 535 and 769. The term was in use, particularly among the Hellenic Jews, and is frequently employed by Philo and others, as a designation of the Messiah, the great Revealer of God. As many false views pre-

Thus the design of his mission is complex; first, to show, by a manifestation the most peculiar and overpowering, *what God is;* and secondly, *what man ought to be;* and having done this, to make "an atonement for sin," and thus unite God and man, the finite with the infinite, the sinful with the sinless. "God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement." Christ, then, is the central point of union with God. We find God here, are united to God here. In this centre all extremes meet; earth and heaven, sin and holiness, man and God. Jesus is the Mediator, the Reconciler, linked to God by his Divinity on the one side, linked to man by his humanity on the other, as much God as man, as much man as God, the God-man, as the old fathers loved to call him. In this consists that "mystery," or secret of the Divine "will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of time, he might gather together in one, all things *in Christ*, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him."* Christ, then, is the keystone of the spiritual arch, the "Head over all things to the Church," "the fullness of him that filleth all in all;" in other words, "the true God and eternal life."†

This great fact is surely intimated by Christ himself, when, in answer to the request of Philip, "Lord, show us the Fa-

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vailed respecting the import of the term, the Apostle John undertakes to correct them, and applies it to Christ, in its loftiest sense, showing that he is not merely the *Revealer* of God, but really and truly God.

* 2 Cor. v. 19. Ephes. i. 10. † Coloss. i. passim—1 John, iv. 20.

ther and it sufficeth us," he replied in those profoundly mysterious but significant words, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, and how sayest thou, then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, (having no mind, no will, separate from the Divine,) but the Father that *dwelleth in me*, he doeth the works." Now if Christ was not the proper representative of the Father, an incarnate exhibition or manifestation of the Godhead; if, in other words, all the *fullness* of the Godhead did not dwell in him *bodily*, what force or propriety could attach to his words?

Moreover, did not Jesus claim this high dignity when he presented himself to the world as an object of veneration and love, of homage and trust, as "the way, the truth and the life;" as the Saviour of sinners, as the Redeemer at once of the body and the soul, as the Sovereign in Zion, as the Judge of the quick and the dead? Did not all the Apostles and early Christians accept the claim, by placing him at the head of the Church, enthroning him in their heart of hearts, claiming for him the homage of the world, and adoring his glory as that of the only-begotten Son of the Father? "He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of *the glory of God* in the face of Jesus." Beholding that glory through the opening heavens, Stephen, in his dying pangs, exclaimed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The apostle Paul, after speaking of him as the *Creator* and *Lord* of "all things, visible

and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers," adds, "And he is the head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that, *in all things*, he might have the *pre-eminence*."* Possessing "all power in heaven and in earth," and "seated at the right hand of the Majesty of High," it was but the natural impulse of the whole primitive Church to adore him as Lord of all.

Did not the angels accept the claim, when they fell at his feet in adoring worship? Did not the infinite Father himself accept it, when he commanded them to do so? "And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him!"†

Was it not attested by the whole intelligent universe, at the moment when he "took the book and opened the seals, as described in the Apocalypse? Falling at his feet, the whole celestial hierarchy are represented as singing a new song, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. * * * And I beheld and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And

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* Col. i. 15, 18. † Heb. i. 6.

every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever."*

This great truth is discovered in all those passages of Scripture which ascribe to Christ the peculiar names and attributes of God, especially his life-giving, all-quickening, all-judging powers; and also in all those which associate his name or his works with those of the Father and the Holy Spirit. In the formula of baptism, and in the Apostolic benediction, those hallowed names are woven together into an imperishable union, like that of the natures they represent—an argument for the supreme Divinity of Christ, so strong and striking, that it is a matter of amazement that any one should be found sufficiently reckless to doubt it.

The glory of Christ breaks upon our vision at intervals, in the history of his life, and is seen, in its full-orbed splendor, at its close. While on earth it was somewhat veiled, and he might seem, at times, especially to a carnal eye, to be an imperfect manifestation of God. But it appeared in the imposing circumstances which preceded and accompanied his birth, in his intuitive knowledge of the human heart, in the authoritative character of his teaching, in his immaculate purity and elevation of character, in his boundless benevolence and self-sacrifice, in his perfect control, not only of himself, but of all the powers of nature around him, and especially in his absolute command

* Rev. v. 8—14.

of the invisible world. He had "the keys of hell and of death." It shone out upon Mount Tabor, to the wondering gaze of his disciples, Peter, James, and John, when they beheld "his majesty;" to the whole Apostles, when he walked upon the waves of the sea, and hushed the tempest with a word; when he gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, soundness to the lame, life to the dead! It gleamed out, with a resplendent lustre, when he conquered the agony of the cross, broke the barriers of the grave, and, seizing the gates of death, bore them triumphant to the skies. For it was at this moment that he completed the work of redemption, took his station at the head of the Church, and sat down upon the throne of the universe, the object of love and admiration to the universal Church. It was at this point in his history that he "rose up far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come," and that he received the homage and praise of all the heavenly host.

True, he made himself, for a season, "a little lower than the angels"—he "took upon him the form of a servant," and "was found in the likeness of man." To secure the salvation of men, he consented to this humiliation. Despised, rejected, and even crucified, like a slave, he stooped to the deepest abyss of human wretchedness, that he might rescue the lost, and lift them up to God. In this consists the amazing character of his love, so frequently referred to by the Apostles. For he submitted to the whole voluntarily, as "a sacrifice for sin." He did so, when he had

all nature, and man, and spirits, under his control; when he was "ministered unto" by angels; when he was recognized as "the Son of God, with power," as "the Maker of all worlds," the "heir of all things," "the judge of the quick and the dead." "The word was made flesh and dwelt among us." It "behooved him, in all things, to be made like unto his brethren." He was "wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."*

But the instant he had endured all this, and his work on earth was completed, he stood before the universe in all the might and splendor of uncreated Divinity. "In these last days God hath spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things; by whom, also, he made the worlds; who, being the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself" —the sacrifice of himself—"purged our sins, sat down on the right-hand of the majesty on high."†

Jesus was the representative of man, and therefore he lived as a man, felt as a man, wept as a man, died as a man; but he was, also, the representative of God, and therefore he lived, and acted, reigned, and conquered, as a God. As the representative of man, he submitted to the law, and yielded homage to the Father; as the representative of God, he asserted his dominion over law, and claimed

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* Isaiah, liii. 5. † Heb. i. 1—3.

a right to universal supremacy. As the representative of man, he was depressed and exalted, guided and controlled; as the representative of God, he was revered and trusted, exalted and glorified. As the representative of man, he yielded to poverty and toil, to contempt and crucifixion; as the representative of God, he conquered death and the grave, and took his place "at the right-hand of the majesty on high."

Who can deny that, while Jesus acted as if he were man, he also acted as if he were God? He spake, and it was done. He said, Let there be light!—let there be life!—and there was light—there was life! All spirits obeyed him—all the elements of nature submitted to his control. He yielded to death, so far, at least, as his human constitution was concerned; but he could not see corruption; and, therefore, he rose again, in fulfillment of his own prediction, "Destroy this temple, and in three days *I will raise it up again.*" By this, he proved himself, what he claimed to be, *the resurrection and the life*, and was declared to "be the Son of God, with power"—a fact illustrated and enforced in the book of Revelation, where Christ is represented as affirming, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last," as if he comprehended all existence within himself; as if he were, at once, space and infinitude, time and eternity! "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord; which is, and which was, and which is to come!"*

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* Rev. i. 8.

As the representative of God, Christ is the centre of his own religious system. To him, give all the prophets witness. To him, all the Apostles point. In him, all Christians believe. For him, all martyrs bleed. The primitive disciples were known as those "who called upon the name of the Lord." "They sang hymns to him," Pliny tells us, "as a God." They recognized him as their Lord and King. The dying, in all ages, hail him as the portion of their souls. He is the great object of love and adoration to the universal Church. He presides over it as his kingdom. He acts as its living soul. He forms its strength, vitality, and joy. To "win Christ, and be found in him;" in other words, to live "in Christ," and to die "in Christ," is the great aim of the Apostles and primitive disciples. In comparison with this, they count every thing but loss. For this they labor, and suffer, and die. This fills all their vision when they gaze into the future, and long for the world beyond the grave. On earth they "behold his glory," and "are changed into his image;" but in heaven they hope to see him, "face to face." "To live, is Christ; to die, is gain." To be "absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord." "For it doth not yet appear," says St. John, with wondrous depth of meaning, "what we shall be; but when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." A sinner, to be saved, must "believe in Christ;" a saint, to be glorified, must "die in Christ." Thus, "blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." Heaven itself is attractive, because Christ is there. "The Lord God and the Lamb are the light thereof."

Hence all, who are recognized as the disciples of Christ, hail him as their Redeemer, their Saviour, and Sovereign. They love him with "a boundless, burning adoration," and rejoice in him, "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."* As the representative of the Father, the image of the invisible God, he is the sun of their heaven, the centre of their felicity.

But Christ is not only the centre of his own religious system, but he occupies the same place in relation to the universe. The Bible represents him as constituting the centre of all minds, as sustaining and governing all worlds. By him all things are created and upheld. They reflect his glory; they advance his plans.† "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom ruleth over all." So that in heaven, and on earth, in the Church, and in the world, "in all things," in all places, he has "the preëminence." In a word, he occupies the sphere of supreme Divinity—"manifesting," through all ranks of being, and in all places of his dominion, that "eternal life, which was with the Father," the seat and essence of infinite love and power. The prophet, then, indulges in no hyperbole, when, regarding him as the representative of the Godhead, he describes him as the *Wonderful;* and Robert Hall only expresses the obvious doctrine of Revelation, when he says: "the mysterious constitution of the person of Christ, is the stupendous link which unites God and man, and heaven and earth; the mystic ladder, on which the angels of God

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* 1 John, iii. 2. † John, i. 3. 1 Coloss. i. 16. Heb. i. 2.

ascend and descend; whose foot is on a level with the dust, and whose summit penetrates the inmost recesses of an unapproachable splendor!"*

Here, then, we remark that, if Jesus Christ, in order to be a proper representative of man, must himself be a man, it follows that, in order to be a proper representative of God, he must also be God. The man, however, is not the God; nor the God the man. But God is in the man, by an ineffable union, with all his fullness of majesty and power, as in a sacred temple, through which is shining all the light and glory of heaven. We do not worship the temple, magnificent as it is, but the Divinity within the temple—"God over all, blessed forever." The nature of the union; in other words, the mystery of the incarnation, we cannot explain; but the union itself we assert and maintain. For, to occupy the centre of truth, to be the great object of interest, of affection, veneration, and confidence to the universal Church; to sit on the throne of the universe; to govern in the kingdom of grace; to possess the "keys of hell and of death;" to create and to control the visible and invisible worlds; to receive the homage of angels and men; and, finally, to judge the quick and the dead, is the prerogative only of the Supreme God. There is a sense, then, profound, mysterious, inexplicable, in which *God is in Christ*, and in which *Christ is God*. "And, without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness—God was manifested in the flesh!"†

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* Works, Vol. I., p. 265.

† The word *mystery*, here used, designates, it is said, by Neander and others, the

To the view thus presented, it has been earnestly objected by Channing and others, that it is totally inconsistent with the doctrine of the Divine Unity. But how can that be, for the same Bible, which reveals the one, reveals also the other? Those, therefore, who, from this source, derive the Divinity of Christ, believe also in the unity of God. To us, as well as to the Unitarian, there is only *one God.* No one, who is baptized in the name of the sacred Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, supposes that he is baptized in the name of three Gods. Nor can an intelligent believer in Christ be found, who, in worshipping Christ, does not worship the one true and living God. In that celebrated passage, where the Divine Unity is expressly taught, the Godhead of Christ is tacitly implied; and yet the passage is often quoted to disprove this very doctrine. "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."* Here the unity of God, as well as the unity of Christ, in opposition to polytheism, is distinctly taught. But the same things are predicated of both. Thus: "One God, by whom are all things." "One Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things." "One God, and we in him." "One Lord Jesus Christ, and we by him." We admit, indeed, that there is a slight variation in the expressions, indicating the relations

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Gospel, rather than the person or character of Christ. But what is the Gospel without Christ? If the Gospel, or Christianity, is a mystery, we are sure Christ is. After all, we hold to the natural application of the term.

* 1 Cor. viii. 6.

between the Father and Son—the one being God absolute, the other "God manifest in the flesh." But they are represented, in their sphere, that is to say, in the specific relations which they sustain to the universe, and especially to the Church, as possessing the same attributes, and accomplishing the same results. *All things* are *of* the Father, as the supreme and absolute God; *all things* are of the Son, or *by the Son*, as the *Logos*, or medium of the Divine energy and love; first, as the Creator of all things; and, secondly, as the Redeemer of all things; or, first, as the Maker of the world; and, secondly, as the Saviour of the world;—the same idea, precisely, which is expressed in St. John, i. 1—4, where the *Word*, made flesh, is represented as Creator and Redeemer:—"All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men." How beautifully and strikingly, then, is it said, that *we* are *of him*, and *by him*, and *to him*, as we are *of*, and *by*, and *to* the one eternal God. There is one God, according to this passage, and one Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, who are essentially and morally one; and, therefore, receive the same undivided and everlasting worship. For all men are commanded "to honor the Son, even as they honor the Father."

To us, then, there is only one God; but the Saviour, whom we revere and love, as "the way, the truth, and the life," is that one God in human form. Let it never, however, be forgotten, that this is not a question to be settled by metaphysical distinctions, or arithmetical figures; and

hence we are far from saying, that one is *three*, or *three* one, in any *ordinary* sense of these expressions, especially in any *numerical* or mathematical sense, as some absurdly charge upon us; yet we do say that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and that, in some sense, mysterious, or not explained, these three are one. A fact remains—a *fact*, whether we can explain its relations to other facts or not. So here, the unity of God and the Divinity of Christ are asserted as facts; but whether we can explain the exact relation between them, and so make them identical, or harmonious, in the eyes of human reason, is another question. Could the matter be determined by a mathematical computation, or an algebraic process, it would have been settled long ago; and it seems to us high time that the Divinity of Christ were attacked, if attacked at all, on other grounds than those which every sensible person must admit have nothing to do with the subject. That three subsistences here are one, or one three in every sense, especially in a common, obvious, and, above all, arithmetical or mathematical sense, no man, who reveres the word of God, can admit. Nor can any one be found obtuse enough to maintain so gross an absurdity. It is only in *some sense*—some sense consistent with the nature and essence of God—some sense recondite, or unrevealed, in which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are three, and yet one. But of this we shall have something more to say in the succeeding chapter. At present, all that we affirm is, that our views of the mystery are such as to be entirely consistent with the fundamental doctrine of the Divine Unity. None

of us, with imperfect knowledge and limited capacity, may so far comprehend the absolute essence and infinite nature of God, as to be capable of showing, by a logical process, how Jesus Christ can be God, and yet there be only one supreme Divinity; that is to say, we may not understand the metaphysics or ontology of the case. Probably we have not arrived at the ultimate facts or principles involved in it; just as we have not yet arrived at the ultimate facts or principles involved in the law of gravitation; and, while admitting it as a scientific fact, cannot tell what it really is—cannot tell whether it may not be a modification of magnetism, or of some other power, known or unknown. Hence, both on scriptural and philosophical grounds, it is our safer course simply to maintain the facts, as revealed or proved, by adequate evidence, and wait for a higher condition of being, or of knowledge, to elucidate the whole. We would not, indeed, discourage investigation; but how can we investigate without means or data? The subject may transcend our powers; and all our speculations, therefore, may be only "plunges in the dark." Yet the subject is not so difficult as has been imagined; it seems to us the mind may rest in the simple *fact* of Christ's Divinity, as proved—feeling assured that there is some sense unknown and mysterious, in which a Trinity is consistent with Unity —in which Jesus Christ is truly and properly a man, and yet "God manifest in the flesh." All truth is made up of contrasts. Every fact has two sides—the one dark, and the other luminous. Nay, more; it requires two opposites, philosophers tell us, to make a truth. If you have only

one, you have only a half truth; and a half truth is an error. It is the union of the two which makes the truth; just as in chemistry, it is the union of opposites, acids and alkalies, for example; or as in electricity, of negatives and positives, which forms perfect combinations. In dynamics, we have action and re-action—centripetal and centrifugal forces, the result of which is "the music of the spheres." Man is mortal and immortal. He is form and spirit; body and mind. Man, too, is free and dependent; a part and a whole; an animal and a spirit.* The universe itself is spirit and form, substance and phenomena, absolute being and relative qualities; infinite essence and finite forms; in other words, God and his creation. The union of these two gives us realities, or truths. Why, then, should it be deemed strange, if we should find contrasts in the very nature of God, especially of God manifest in the flesh? Divinity—humanity; God—man; spirit—flesh, are opposites; but they unite somewhere. The Father, God; the Son, God; the Holy Ghost, God; seem to contradict each other, especially the two former; for here is God, as an infinite spirit; and here, also, is God incarnate; God in human form—as it were, a God degraded, or rather, veiled and obscured; but all these opposites harmonize, and form the eternal verity respecting the nature and manifestation of God.

We call this the doctrine of the Trinity—understanding,

* Freedom and dependence, liberty and limitation, or, as theologians say, free grace and free will, are but the opposite sides of a great truth.

by that term, simply a Unity in Trinity. It is not, properly speaking, a scriptural term. It may be liable, also, to misconception and abuse. Moreover, it "sounds oddly," as Luther affirms; and, in the hands of those who reject the proper Deity of Christ, may be perverted into a kind of argument against the doctrine. But it is to be regarded as a simple theological formula, expressive of a great fact, not entirely elucidated—lying, in part, to say the least, within the boundaries of the unknown; but a fact, clearly revealed in the Holy Scriptures, namely, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, constitute the one true and living God. But we are interested here more about things than forms, realities than words; and, while we make this explanation, we cannot withhold our contempt from that rash and irreligious temerity which sweeps away, sometimes, with a single stroke of a pen, the entire mystery of this awful subject, and maintains that there is nothing wonderful or inexplicable in the person and constitution of the Son of God. Sceptics, themselves, admit this; and, as philosophy becomes more liberal and spiritual in its character, they will admit it more and more. We have been surprised and delighted to find, among the speculative minds of France and Germany, those even whom we are accustomed, perhaps too hastily, to term infidels, so profound a sense of this divine mystery, and so much readiness to allow that the Scriptures, in their literal and obvious sense, teach the supreme Divinity of Christ. As a single specimen of this, we quote the following passage from Goethe's Wanderjahre. Speaking of Jesus Christ, and in reference to some contrasts

in his history, he says: "In life he appears a true philosopher—let not the expression stagger you—as a wise man, in the highest sense. He stands firm to this point; he goes on his way inflexibly, and while he exalts the lower to himself—while he makes the ignorant, the poor, the sick, partakers of his wisdom, of his riches, of his strength, he, on the other hand, in nowise conceals his divine origin; he dares to equal himself with God; nay, to declare that he himself is God."*

Indeed, thoughtful men are beginning to see that the idea of an incarnation is one of the most natural that can be formed, that Jesus Christ is proved, by his life alone, to be *the good*, in its loftiest and widest sense; and that he is the most appropriate temple, the brightest and most perfect manifestation of the indwelling God, who also is *the good*. They are coming, therefore, to the conclusion, that the finite must find the infinite, the sinful the sinless, by faith; in other words, by union with the Son of God. This great fact, according to Schleiermacher, is the basis of all religion.† Jesus the *Mediator* must be human and yet

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* Quoted by Carlyle in his elaborate and beautiful article on Goethe.

† "But the question now comes, how are we to realize our oneness with the absolute; how can we rise to this high and holy religious consciousness? This is the point illustrated by Schleiermacher, in his Weihnachtsfeier, (Christmas Festival,) in which *Christ* is represented as the perfect union of the human consciousness with the Divine; and man exhorted, by a living union with him, to realize his own union with God." Morell's History of Modern Philosophy, p. 618.

In a work just published in Paris, by Athanase Coquerel, the celebrated French pulpit orator, generally considered a Rationalist, and even a Unitarian, under the title of "*Christianisme*," or *Christianity—in its perfect adaptation to the Mental, Moral and Spiritual Nature of Man*, we find the followlng passage: "To fulfill the office of a Saviour in a department of creation, that is, to effect a charge of direction in an activity, which has wandered from its faith, and to lead it towards God, is to touch upon the work

infinite, in order to restore the soul to God. A God abstract, a God absolute, we cannot reach. We yearn for it, but we cannot reach it, cannot blend with it. A Mediator, a Reconciler is needed. God himself must come to us—come to us in an aspect and form which we can understand. In fact, he must link himself to us, by an incarnation, in order to make us partakers of his nature, and heirs of his immortality. He has done so in the person and work of Jesus Christ. So that believing in him, we find God,—become one with God. "Our life" the soul's life in the infinite and unending, "is hid with Christ in God, and when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then we also shall appear with him in glory."*

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of God, to interfere with his government, to draw upon the infinite in order to render assistance to the finite. Whence three consequences result: First, a redemption would be impossible without the full authorization and continuous participation of the Infinite Being. Secondly, the office of a Saviour could not be filled, except by God himself, or by a being who was his representative, the depository of his powers, the *alter ego* of the Infinite Being, the ideal realized and manifested. Thirdly, the existence of a Redeemer lies without the limits of time; or to speak more precisely, it is in no respects subject to that form of knowledge, to that law of succession. In order to draw freely upon the resources, and to act upon the responsibility of the infinite, there cannot exist between the Redeemer and the Infinite that barrier which we call time.

"Besides, to fill the office of a Saviour in a manner subjective or inward as to its results, and objective or outward as to its means, in a manner at once individual and collective, could not be done by a *theory*, there must also be a *practice*.

"Finally, the fall and sin were those of human activity, and human agency also was necessary for restoration. A man alone could effect and offer a human salvation. * *

"Thus a Redeemer must exhibit a double character; he must be equally in his natural place, one while in the bosom of God, at another in the midst of his redeemed, whomsoever they may be." Hence he adds.: "This double character of a Redeemer involves an impenetrable mystery."

"Christ the God-man," says Schelling, "represented the complete reunion of man to God, the return of the finite revolted will to the infinite—a return which is shadowed forth by his perfect obedience." Morell's "History of Philosophy," p. 451.

* It is on the views just stated that we are to explain the words, "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." Here, so to speak, are two extremes, God and man. How are they to be united? By him, who, as Mediator, is at once divine and human, or the God-man.

Thus while we may not understand the mystery of the incarnation in its ontological or essential relations, we can understand it in those which are religious or practical. From this source we form the clearest and loftiest conceptions of the Divine goodness and love. In this living and breathing incarnation of the Godhead, we see, we feel the love, the purity, the pity of the Father! An abstract and incorporeal Deity, a spirit, all power, all purity, all perfection, a spirit absolute, infinite, immortal, is a grand conception, well fitted to expand the mind; but to see that spirit embodied in human form, to hear him speak in tones of compassion, to behold him wandering among men, as their brother and friend, to look upon him as he dies for the guilty, to see him "face to face," and feel the warm breath of his boundless love stirring the responding affection of our hearts, is to form an idea of God which subdues and blesses the soul. God in Christ! It amazes—it thrills and transforms us! The material creation, with its mountains and seas, its woods and streams, its azure sky and sparkling stars, exhibits the glory of God, and constitutes a silent but expressive revelation of the truth—

"The Gospel of the stars, great nature's Holy Writ."

But in the natural and moral grandeur of the Son of God, in the entrancing beauty of his perfection, in the immeasurable compass of his love, we behold a revelation of the Divine glory, brighter and more touching by far. As beneath the vesture of the material creation the hand of God is seen to move, so here beneath the bosom of Jesus

Christ, the very heart of God is seen to palpitate and burn. It is love, boundless and everlasting, leaping out from the absolute and infinite, to seek and to save the lost!

> "Here love immortal leaves the sky,
> To wipe the weeping mourner's eye,
> And give the weary rest!"

But it is further objected to the Divinity of Christ, that he himself disavows this high claim. "The Father is greater than I"—is cited as a proof of this; and yet the passage rather seems to assert, than disavow his Divinity. That the Father, in some sense, is greater than the Son, our Saviour here teaches; but what does this imply, if not, that in other senses the Son is equal with the Father? We need not to be informed that a man or an angel is inferior to God; but we do need to be informed that "the Son of God," "whose name is above every name," and who counts it "no robbery to be equal with God," is, in some aspects of his character, subordinate to the Father. As Messiah, as Mediator, the man Jesus Christ yields submission and homage to the Father; but his indwelling Divinity is one with the Father. As the Mediator, "the Head of Christ is God," just as Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is "the Head of every man." Here, then, in this very passage, quoted to prove the contrary, we find a beautiful and convincing evidence of our Saviour's Divinity, veiled, indeed, by his humanity, and stooping, for a season, to seek and to save the lost.

Another passage, (St. John, x. 24, 29,) frequently quoted to disprove the Divinity of Christ, will be found to teach

the same great doctrine. In this passage our Saviour furnishes an explanation, touching his relation to the Father, to rebut the accusation of the Jews, who charged him with a blasphemous assumption of the Divine prerogatives. "How long," said they, "dost thou make us to doubt? if thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." In reply, he refers them to what he had already said upon the subject, and to "the works" which he had performed in attestation of his claims. But he knew well that the difficulty lay not in any thing without them, that is to say, not in the state of their understanding, but of their affections. They were not "of his sheep," and "could not hear his voice." Hence he adds: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." Here, it will be perceived, Jesus affirms of himself what he also affirms of the Father,—bringing out the grand truth of his identity with the Father; and thus claiming to be the Messiah—the Son and representative of the Father, in the very highest sense of the words. "I and my Father are *one!*" is his brief and pregnant method of expressing it. "Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shown you from my Father; for which of these works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not, but for *blasphemy;* and because that thou, *being a*

man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said ye are gods? If ye call them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the Scriptures cannot be broken; say ye of him whom the Father hath sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe me not, believe the works: that ye may know and believe that the Father is *in me*, and *I in Him.*"

Now, what is it that our Saviour disclaims in this passage? Is it that he was not entitled to be denominated *the* Son of God?—that he was not *one* with the Father?—that the Jews were mistaken as to the nature of his claim, and that he was not therefore *God manifest in the flesh?* No! he rather vindicates his title to these high distinctions. It is true, he refers to a case in which judges or princes were called gods, (Elohim,) in an inferior sense, as representatives of God in matters of civil government and justice. But he most clearly intimates that he bore the title in a higher sense. If they were called gods to whom the word of God came, why say ye of him, who is the anointed Messiah, the sanctified or consecrated of the Father, the Messenger of the covenant, the eternal Word, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God, and therefore one with God? Look at my works; do they not prove the propriety of my claim? Do they not evince that "the Father is in me, and I in Him?" Is not this the meaning of our Saviour, fully brought out? Could it with any propriety be said of the

ancient judges and princes of Israel that they were *one with God?* No, the word of God merely came to them. Theirs was an inferior and delegated authority. But Jesus was the *Word* itself,—the very brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; and if judges and princes bore the title of Elohim, (God,) with how much greater propriety might Jesus bear it? Thus, it must be obvious that he disavows nothing, but rather vindicates the propriety of his exalted claims. The Jews understood it so; and hence is it added, with peculiar significance, "Therefore they sought again to take him, but he escaped out of their hands." With their views, that is, deeming him a mere man, it is not surprising that they believed him guilty of blasphemy, in claiming to be one with God, and thence, notwithstanding his explanation, they were ready to stone him to death.

On another occasion Jesus vindicated the propriety of his working on the Sabbath day, on the ground that the Almighty, in the control and management of the universe, does the same. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." This was esteemed by the Jews as equivalent to the claim of supreme Divinity. "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that *God* was his Father, *making himself equal with God.* Then answered Jesus and said unto them: The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do. For the Father loveth the Son and showeth him all things that himself doeth, and he will

show him greater things than these, (the works he had just performed,) that ye may marvel."*

It is maintained, that here again Jesus disclaims supreme Divinity. But we submit whether this is not an obvious mistake; for he seems to us rather to affirm his Divinity. What he disclaims, is not identity with God, equality with the Father, but *independence* of God, separate existence and authority. The Son can do nothing of *himself*, that is, independently of the Father, or differently from the Father. They are one,—the Son feels as the Father feels, acts as the Father acts. The Jews charged Jesus with setting up a separate and exclusive authority; and had he not been the Son of God, and therefore *one* with God, this charge would have been just. He takes pains, therefore, to show that he acted in connection with the Father, and that he did neither more nor less than what the Father did. "For whatsoever things he doeth, these doeth the Son likewise." Then borrowing an illustration from what ordinarily occurs between a father and a son, he says:—"For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth, and he will show him greater things than these, that ye may marvel."

Hence, the most stupendous works of the Deity, such as quickening the dead, renovating the heart, and judging the world, are those also which are performed by the Son. "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

* John, v. 17, 20.

For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should *honor the Son, even as* they honor *the Father.* * * * * Verily, verily I say unto you, the hour is coming, yea now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath *life in himself*, so hath he given to the Son to have life *in himself.*" How could this be done, except by uniting the Godhead with the humanity of Jesus? Independent life, and the power of communicating life, is the highest and most essential prerogative of God.

Thus, then, it pleased the Father that *in the man* Jesus should *all fullness dwell* :—"in him dwelleth all the *fullness* of the Godhead bodily;" whence he is the head over all things to the church. "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man,"—*because he is the Messiah.* "Marvel not at this," he adds, "for the hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation." But, in conclusion, he shows that all this would take place in harmony with the mind of the Father, that the Son could do nothing of himself, that he must ever maintain the single and supreme authority of the Father, and act in harmony with the counsels of his will. "I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge; and my

judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." No,—Jesus has no independent and exclusive will, no separate and divided interests. He is *one* with the Father, one in nature, one in purpose, one in action. And therefore, *all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.*

But how frequently has the very fact of our Saviour's condescension, his voluntary "susception of our nature," and his obedience unto death, been cited against the doctrine of his proper Divinity; when all that the Scriptures, and all that orthodox believers affirm, is the fact of a *voluntary* incarnation, or the assumption by the Godhead of an inferior and suffering nature, with a view to the redemption of the world. It is the WORD, not the flesh, the Godhead, not the manhood, of which we predicate Divinity. The Word essentially and immutably Divine, "was made flesh and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." This, then, is "God in the flesh,"—"all the fullness of the Godhead," dwelling bodily in the man Jesus Christ, and constituting the one great and all-commanding fact, taught by Apostles and apostolic men. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the *Word of Life.* For *the Life* was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that *eternal Life*, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may

have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with *the Father* and with *his Son Jesus Christ.* And we know that the *Son of God* is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know *him that is true;* and we are *in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.* This is *the true God and eternal Life.*"*

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* 1 John, i. 1—3; v. 20.

CHAPTER III.

THE INCARNATION AS A MYSTERY.

We have more than once remarked that the manifestation of God, in the person of Christ, is a mystery; and intelligent readers, perhaps, have attached to that expression a just and scriptural idea. But the whole subject of mystery, and consequently the mystery of the Incarnation, is involved in unnecessary difficulty, by the prevalence of inadequate and erroneous views. The matter, therefore, requires elucidation, as it is essential to a proper and consistent idea of the nature and mission of Christ. What, then, is a mystery; and in what sense, and to what extent does the manifestation of the Godhead, in the person of Christ, bear this character?

A mystery, in the most natural and obvious signification of the term, is something secret or hidden, something into which it is necessary to be initiated. Many things, therefore, which have been mysteries, may cease to bear this character. The veil may be lifted, and the secrets or mysteries revealed.* Others, again, may be only partially concealed, and thus lie partly in the known, and partly in

* In this sense, the Gospel itself is called a mystery, particularly in its application to the heathen; the Divine intention, in this respect, having been obscurely revealed, or, at least entirely misunderstood, previous to the advent of Christ.

the unknown. Thus the sphericity of the earth, and the antipodes, though known to some extent in the middle ages, were mysteries to those who lived at that time; are mysteries now to those upon whom the light of science has but partially dawned. The same remark might be made respecting the electric telegraph, which is yet a profound mystery to many persons. This arises from no inherent difficulty in the subjects themselves, but from the partial knowledge of those who are compelled to regard them as mysteries. They know something about them from report or otherwise; believe their existence, perhaps, on the testimony of others, but they know them only as mysteries. It is with difficulty, sometimes, as in the case of the sphericity of the earth, and its revolution around the sun, that they admit their existence at all; for they appear contradictory to their most cherished judgments, nay, to the testimony of their senses.

A mystery is not an absolute enigma, far less an absurdity, or a contradiction. It is, simply, something more or less difficult or obscure. In theological phrase, it is applied to those great truths or facts, which lie, to some extent, in the region of the unknown, and which cannot, therefore, be fully understood. Something is known about them, but not enough to remove all difficulty and obscurity. They are apprehended, but not comprehended. One or more of their aspects, one or more of their relations lie in shadow. They are known, but only "in part."

A mystery, then, does not contradict our reason. It only transcends it. It is a matter of difficulty and obscurity,

only because our knowledge is partial and one-sided; or because our mind is not infinite and omniscient. It belongs to a region, the greater part of which has not been discovered, far less explored, and upon which, therefore, it is useless to speculate.

Hence, we remark, that a mystery, while obscure and difficult in some of its relations, is not, as sceptics frequently claim, a matter upon which we are incapable of forming just and definite opinions. For the very idea of a mystery, implies a knowledge of the existence of that respecting which it is affirmed. Its reality may be certified by evidence, and its nature and bearings partly explained. In some way, however, it transcends our faculties. Clear enough in part, it is obscure as a whole. In the origin, or mode of its existence, in its relations to the infinite and the absolute, it is more or less above us, or beyond us, like a star, clear and beautiful in one of its phases, but otherwise hidden in the depths of immeasurable space.

A mystery is the limit of our present powers, the goal of our investigations and discoveries, the point at which our positive knowledge ceases, and where commences for us the unknown, the inexplicable, the infinite. "It is not the radiant day, in which everything appears in a clear light; nor is it that profound darkness in which we see nothing; it is the twilight of reason and faith, in which the objects are real and active, but at a distance, seen in a confused and gloomy shade, so that the sharpness of the outline is effaced, the colors are confounded, and the objects themselves commingle; the characters, like an inscription, are read in

broken words, by the feeble glimmering of a sepulchral lamp, and the only word which is distinctly legible is, mystery!"*

Christianity recognizes mysteries of this description, truths partly discovered and partly unknown, truths, especially, which pertain to the absolute and the eternal, which lie like islands in that great ocean of mystery, the self-existent and eternal One. Some of these truths are in themselves inscrutable, and could never be known, even partially, except by a Divine revelation. Of this description is the mystery of the Incarnation—the mystery of the Godhead, as revealed in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. "For I would," says Paul, "that ye knew what great conflict I have for you and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of *the mystery of God*, and of the *Father*, *and of Christ*, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." "And without controversy, great is the *mystery* of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh."†

As a manifestation of the Godhead, as a Being at once human and Divine, as the connecting link between Heaven and earth, the nature and mission of Jesus would naturally be a subject of difficulty to the reason and philosophy of this world. On this ground, adds the Apostle, "Beware

* "Christianisme;" par Athanase Coquerel. † Col. ii. 1—3; 1 Tim. iii. 16.

lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition (teaching) of men, and not after Christ. For in him *dwelleth all the fullness* of the *Godhead bodily*. And ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power."*

In these expressions is discovered to us the grand peculiarity of the Christian Faith. It proposes to unite the soul to God, the great end of all religion, by uniting it to Christ. For this purpose it presents Christ to us, as the sum and essence of all goodness, the source and fountain of all wisdom and grace, and thence made unto those who believe, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; as a Being, therefore, to be loved, revered and adored. This we call a mystery; but not a mystery entirely unknown or unnatural in any way. Nay, it is precisely what we might expect. It is, certainly, what we need. For religion, in its true sense, is not so much a doctrine as a life.† Moreover, it is a life in the infinite and eternal; in other words, a life in God. Hence we cannot be saved by bare beliefs, traditions, or externalities of any kind. No system, however perfect and magnificent, can save us. We are estranged from God, and must return to God, in order to live.‡ But how shall the finite, above all, how shall the

* Coloss. ii. 8.

† Doubtless it is both. The doctrine or the truth, apprehended by the mind, and received by the heart, produces the life, and the life sustains the doctrine. They act and react upon each other. The doctrine, indeed, may exist without the life, but not the life without the doctrine. To have light and heat, you need the sun. To have spiritual life, which is holy love, you must have the truth, which is the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ. "Faith worketh by love."

‡ "Life only can produce life."—*Vinet.* To which we add, God only can reproduce his own image. Union with God is the soul's life.

fallen and the lost, reach God, but by the intervention of God himself? How shall we become one with him, unless, somehow, he make himself one with us? But the Gospel invites us to Christ. One with him, we are one with God. "No man," says he, "cometh unto the Father but by me." "He that believeth in me shall never die." It is only in this way that, practically and experimentally, we come to the knowledge of God. "This is life eternal to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

But how shall God become incarnate? How unite himself with a finite form? Above all, how shall he suffer in that finite form? How shall the *just* be as the *unjust*—the *sinless*, as the *sinful*—the ever-blessed and eternal, as the crucified and slain? Ah! these are the secrets, the mysteries which baffle the profoundest intellects, and leave the mission of Jesus in a sacred obscurity. Yet, light is gleaming through the cloud; and philosophy itself can discern its beauty and glory. If ever God manifested himself in all the splendor of his infinite perfection, it was in the life and character of Christ. Long were the heavens covered with shadows; but they opened at last, and, through the rent, the Sun of Righteousness poured his radiance upon the world. But that Sun is too bright, and stretches too far into the depths above us, to be narrowly scanned by human eyes. It involves a dread and fathomless mystery.

We say, then, in the first place, that the doctrine of the incarnation, or of the Godhead of Christ, cannot be fully

comprehended; nor is it meant to be comprehended, except by the affections. If the intellect does not quite understand it, we are sure the heart does—clinging to Christ, as brother, Saviour, friend—and not only so, but as Master and Sovereign. If reason has a limit and a difficulty here, the heart has none. Nay, this great mystery has solved all other difficulties with which the heart has long struggled in darkness and sorrow, opening up for it a luminous and blessed pathway to God and glory. Here it has found—what it long sought in vain—the infinite, the perfect and immortal.

Certainly a great mystery attaches to the incarnation of Christ—using the word in its ordinary signification—and the nature of that intimate and glorious union, subsisting between him and a believing soul. For, to be a believer, a man must not simply admit the teaching of Christ, or the morality of Christ; he must not only believe Christianity as a fact, and Jesus Christ as a man, as a teacher, or reformer, or even as the God-man; but he must believe *in* Christ, that is to say, his heart and soul must be so united, so wedded and assimilated to Christ, that it may be truly said, that he is *in Christ*, and Christ *in* him. It is only thus that he can be transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord; only thus that he can comprehend "the riches of the glory of this mystery, which," says the Apostle, "is Christ in you the hope of glory."*

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* Coloss. i. 27.

But the difficulty to the intellect is not greater than is found in a thousand things beside—things, too, which all men instantly admit. Indeed, there are no subjects, whether in the science of matter or of mind, which are not environed with difficulties. Inquiries can be started upon all matters of abstract and philosophical speculation, beyond the grasp of the finite intellect; nay, more, a child can ask questions about himself, or about the world around him, which baffle the profoundest thinkers. "A grain of sand," says the philosophical Vinet, "is an abyss." Every thing, indeed, in the whole range of animate and inanimate nature, is associated directly or indirectly with mysteries; every question in philosophy and morals can be run up to some insuperable difficulty, where the intellect must stop and confess its ignorance. Light and darkness, knowledge and mystery are associated in all the speculations of the finite mind. The day rests in the bosom of night. The stars are set in a firmament of gloom.

Our knowledge, so far as it goes, may be definite, and the language in which it is expressed, clear and intelligible; yet that knowledge, like the segment of an infinite circle, links itself, at all points, to mysteries. Facts may be ascertained, and constantly recognized, in the ordinary avocations of life; but, as to their origin and mode of existence, we may be plunged in the deepest ignorance. Furthermore, some of these facts may appear to involve contradictions, and give rise to inquiries, before which the mightiest intellects fall prostrate. The science of mathematics, even, involves the infinite, and, in some cases, the impossible! It

recognizes this sublime contradiction, that there may be two lines which ever approach, but never meet, and, finally, loses itself in the boundless depths of the "infinitesimal calculus." If chemistry does not involve, it certainly suggests the infinite. It has its agents imponderable and universal; its permanent basis, or substance, (id quod stat per se,) in which all physical qualities adhere; its infinite divisibility of body, with its definite and immutable atoms. What is matter?—what its essence and mode of existence?—what its origin and its end? How does it link itself to spirit, and how can it give and receive impressions and motions? It seems essentially diverse from spirit, and yet they act and re-act upon each other. Matter, as it exists in space and time, the product of an infinite mind, "from whom are all things," is one of the profoundest mysteries that has ever engaged the attention of thoughtful men. What, moreover, is mind—spirit, especially as uncreated and eternal? What is our own mind, that mysterious something, which thinks, and feels, and wills, and suffers, and rejoices? What are its nature and essence, its mode of existence, its ineffable relation to God, and the creation around it? What, even, is the union of body and soul? How are they linked, and what strange power causes them to act in harmony? "Whence," to use the language of Chateaubriand, "that flash of lightning which we call existence, and in what night is it to be extinguished? The Almighty has placed birth and death, under the form of veiled phantoms, at the two extremities of our career—the one pro-

duces the incomprehensible moment of life, which the other hastens to devour."*

So far, indeed, has speculation upon these high themes led philosophers, that they have found themselves compelled to deny the relation of cause and effect; nay, the very existence of matter, as an objective reality, maintaining there can be nothing in the universe but mind or spirit, and that all material substances, and the changes of which they are susceptible, are only forms and phantoms of the all-embracing mind. Others, again, pressed with a similar difficulty, but starting from different premises, and especially from the position that all our ideas are either derived from external objects, or greatly modified by them, have denied the existence of mind or spirit, and have referred all the modifications of thought and feeling to the organization and action of material forms. This class of philosophers have imagined the possibility of elucidating and harmonizing all subjects of human inquiry. Sitting, so to speak, at the centre of the universe, and with minds of infinite grasp and range, they feel that the whole thing, past, present, and to come, is under their immediate eye. Mystery, in their creed, is an exploded idea. They must never take any thing for granted—must never confess their ignorance—never own the existence of a mystery. So, plunging into the boundless ocean of thought, without chart or compass, and swept onward and afar by the resistless force of invisible currents, they soon lose themselves

* Oeuvres Completes. Genie Du Christianisme. Tome III., p. 6.

amid tempest and darkness, and sink, at last, in the fathomless abyss.

Thus, by the rejection of all mystery, and speculating beyond the range of the human mind, multitudes, even of acute and learned men, have succeeded in denying the existence both of matter and of mind, the being and personality of God, the reality of the soul, and the reality of the body; so that the perfection and end of all philosophy has been their arrival, according to some of the philosophers of the Hegelian school, at *absolute nothing!*

Such are the boasted achievements of a philosophy which begins by rejecting all mysteries, and ends by making every thing a mystery, absolute and fathomless—a mystery darker than the grave, and boundless as eternity.

But if these things occur in human science, what may we not expect in divine? If man is a mystery, what is God? If the life that now is presents enigmas and secrets the most profound and awful, what shall we find in "the life to come?" If with propriety we can say, Great is the mystery of nature, *mind* is manifest in *matter*, may we not, with still greater propriety exclaim, *Great is the mystery* of *godliness*, *God was manifest in the flesh?*

Relations and modes of existence lie concealed in the immeasurable depths of nature, never dreamt of in our insulated and short-lived philosophy. Vast fields of thought stretch into infinitude and eternity, beyond the ken of man, or of angel. The universe, even, as an outward thing, a matter of space and time, of limited forms and temporary duration, has itself been termed "an infinite mystery."

And if this be true of the creature, what shall we say of the Creator? "Canst thou, by searching, find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." The visible and material around us, boundless as it seems, is but the shadow of God. "Lo, these are a part of his ways; but the thunder (the secret) of his power, who can understand?" An old divine looking into this subject, and catching but a dim outline of the Divine glory, could only exclaim, in adoring rapture, "O, the depths! O, the depths!"

We have some experience of the nature and constitution of man; what have we of the nature and constitution of God? We have some imperfect acquaintance with modes of existence in time; what have we of modes of existence in eternity? Can we reason from the one to the other dogmatically? Can we find adequate analogies between them? Man is the creature, God is the Creator. Man is dependent and changeable, God is independent and changeless. Man is finite, God is infinite. Man is confined to a particular sphere, God inhabits eternity. Man looks out upon all things, and receives constantly accretions of thought and feeling; God holds all things in himself, and sheds upon them beauty and glory. "In him we live, and move, and have our being." True, indeed, man was created in the image of God, but this has reference to his intellectual and moral nature, his power of self-consciousness and self-control, his sense of right and wrong,

with his susceptibility of pure and spiritual joy; but not to his essence or the mode of his existence. For, while man is a moral and responsible agent, he is neither God nor a part of God. He is a creature formed by God, and therefore altogether distinct from God. Man has the sense of the infinite, but he is not himself infinite. He can blend with the infinite, but can never fully comprehend it—never fully embrace it. His joy, therefore, may increase forever, but it is derived and dependent. Pure and spiritual, ever-blessed and immortal he may become; but he owes the whole to "the Father of spirits," "who only hath immortality." Poetry, indeed, has sometimes taught a different lesson, and a transcendental, imaginative philosophy has endorsed it. But reason does not; the Bible does not. Common sense does not. The thing, in fact, involves a contradiction. Man can neither be God nor part of God; for God is not made up of parts. Division, multiplication, or abstraction, cannot be predicated of his essence. Infinite being can neither be increased nor diminished, multiplied nor divided. His essence and mode of existence must be peculiar and exclusive. Nothing in the universe can bear to it any just analogy. Man is the image of his intelligent and moral nature; an image, when perfect, clearer and more beautiful than all the stars of light; but he is not an image of the Divine essence and mode of existence. This may be known as a fact, vast and unutterable, but it transcends all our reason and understanding. It is high as heaven—what can we do? Deeper than hell; *what can we know?* On this subject

we have neither data, means of comparison and judgment, nor appropriate powers of investigation. Logic and calculation equally fail us; science pauses in reverence and godly fear. Philosophy cannot aid us in a case like this; for her range is limited by the capacities of the finite mind. She may discover and recognize the infinite, but she cannot fathom it. She can neither analyse its nature, nor solve its mystery. Natural science cannot aid us, for her true province is confined to the outward and the phenomenal. She tells us of relations and changes, of quantities and forms, of attributes and affections, and intimates, as her last result, that these belong to beings, or substances, or what she chooses to denominate such; but she does not even pretend to enter the infinite, and explain the natures and essences of things. Upon their absolute constitution, and essential mode of existence, she is dumb as the grave. Nor can the spiritual or transcendental philosophy aid us; for while she professes to construct a bridge from the phenomenal to the actual, the relative to the absolute, the finite to the infinite, she cannot tell what the *actual*, the *absolute*, the *infinite*, really is. To her, it is nothing more than a grand ineffable *reality*, perhaps *possibility*, according to Kant, with august and overwhelming attributes of power, intelligence, and will, and it may be of purity and love; but further than this she cannot tell *what* it is, or *how* it is. Here we find the limits of our power, and like that old and reverent Divine, can only cry out, "O, the depths! O, the depths!"*

* In an address to the Deity, whom he denominates "the Exalted and Living Will, the

We are so constituted as to believe that every event must have a cause—that every quality must have a basis, that over against phenomena, there must be substance—over against relations, absolute existence—over against the finite, the infinite—over against multiplicity and change, absolute unity and permanent being; in other words, an infinite, self-existing God, the cause of all things, the Creator of the Heavens and Earth. From the very constitution of our minds, we must maintain the unity, the perfect, absolute, unalterable unity of such a being. To us, in this respect, there can be only "one God." But what distinctions and peculiarities exist in that unity, or in the manifestation of that unity, are questions utterly beyond us. Whether there is not in the very nature of God himself, some basis for a manifestation of himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, we cannot tell. The Scriptures may indicate such a basis, but we cannot explain it. The subject is one upon which reason is incompetent to say a word. Here it has approached the region of mystery, and must pause until God reveal himself.

Whatever, then, has been revealed upon this subject in a well authenticated Revelation, must be received with im-

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Incomprehensible and everlasting One," the philosopher Fichte uses this remarkable language: "What I understand, is from my very understanding it, finite, and by no progression, can ever be transformed into the infinite. Thou differest from the finite, not in degree, but in kind. I will not attempt that which my finite nature forbids. I will not seek to know the nature and essence of thy being. But thy relations to myself and to all that is finite, lie open before my eyes. Thou createdst in me the consciousness of my duty—of my destination in the series of rational beings; how, I know not, nor need I know."—*Bestimmung des Menschen.*

plicit submission, however difficult or mysterious, however contrary to our preconceived opinions, however repulsive to our ordinary habits of thinking and reasoning. A contradiction, of course, we cannot receive; but a mystery we can and must. I may know in general that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, but how he is such may baffle all my inquiries. My heart seizes the ineffable idea, and exults under its influence; but my intellect cannot penetrate it, far less explain it. All that can be said upon the subject is, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh."

But it has been complacently said, that "religion ends where mystery begins." The antithesis is striking, but the sentiment is false. For as has been justly remarked, you might as well say that traveling ends where the sea begins. Nay, we go further, and maintain that religion cannot exist without mystery. A religion without a mystery is a religion without a soul, a religion without an hereafter, a religion without a God! When we have discarded the Divinity and incarnation of Christ, the expiation on the cross, and the resurrection of the dead, we have not rid the subject of mysteries, mysteries as profound and inscrutable as those we have rejected. Nay, let a man become an utter atheist, and he surrounds himself with a darkness more deep and terrible, a darkness illumined by no stars, followed by no dawn. He multiplies the secrets of nature a thousand fold, and loses himself in the abyss of a horrible and everlasting mystery.

Had Christianity been a system without a mystery, no

thoughtful man could believe it. Every such man, hungering after the perfect and the eternal, must rejoice that faith and adoration can advance, where science and philosophy are compelled to pause. Sometimes, nay, during his whole life, he may walk in darkness, but the stars are overhead, and the dawn of everlasting day is yet to break upon his vision. In the Gospel there are mysteries; but how magnificent and thrilling! Shadows, but shadows from the infinite, shadows gloriously penetrated with light supernal. How profound the secret of the Godhead, especially of the Godhead incarnate; but how august, how beautiful! Dark, indeed, but dark from excess of light; and it is only in low liness and adoration we can see it, or feel it, in its all-transforming power. The highest intellects have adored it! Millions upon millions have trembled with joy, under its influence. In the night of time, these voyagers, storm-driven upon the ocean of life, have looked up into the infinite depths above them, and beheld "that glory-beaming star," radiant as at the first, when it was hymned by the angels on the plains of Bethlehem, and under its guidance have passed on, through tempest and darkness, to the haven of everlasting rest. Here, as in the case of Francis Junius, mentioned by Scaliger as one of the greatest scholars of his age, who was recovered from absolute atheism by a clear and sudden view of the glory of Christ, for the first time have they found the Light and the Life of the world, and under its influence, have been changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the

Lord. "Thou, Lord my God," exclaims Junius, "didst remember me, and receive me, a lost sheep, into thy fold!"

Merle D'Aubigné, when a young man, a student in Germany, was much perplexed by scriptural doubts and difficulties. To have them removed, he applied to the venerable and learned Kleuker of Kiel. But the old doctor would not enter into any detailed solution of these difficulties. "Were I to succeed in ridding you of them," said he to me, "others would soon arise. There is a shorter, deeper, more complete way of annihilating them. Let Christ be really to you the Son of God, the Saviour, the Author of eternal life. Only be firmly settled in his grace, and then these difficulties of detail will never stop you: the light which proceeds from Christ will disperse your darkness." "The old Divine," says D'Aubigné, "had shown me the way: I saw it was the right one, but to follow it, was a hard task. God, who had already revealed to me the glory of his well-beloved Son, did not forsake me; but he used another agency to bring me to the work which had been pointed out."

Studying the Epistle to the Ephesians, with two of his young companions, one of whom possessed a peculiarly lofty, pure and devotional spirit, and died in early life, he came to that passage: "Now unto him who is able to do *exceeding abundantly* above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory," &c. The expression in italics fell upon his spirit like a new revelation. They all knelt in prayer; and their supplication, deep and thrilling, penetrated the heavens.

"When I arose in that room at Kiel," says D'Aubigné, "I felt as if my wings were renewed as the wings of eagles. From that time forward I comprehended that my own syllogisms and efforts were of no avail, that Christ was able to do all "by his power that worketh in us; and the habitual attitude of my soul was to lie at the foot of the cross." Soon, all his doubts were dispelled; he was not only delivered from anguish, but the Lord extended to him "peace like a river." Then he could "comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and heighth, and know the love of God which passeth knowledge." Then was he able to say, "Return unto thy rest, O, my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."*

If an inquirer could only get out of himself, out of his own narrowness and littleness, and gain one clear, steady view of the glory of God in the face of Jesus, he would no longer doubt the mystery of the incarnation. It would justify itself, not only to his affections, but to his highest reason. His whole nature, heart and intellect, would rejoice in it with joy unspeakable and full of glory. "Let a man," says Cecil, "read Maclaurin's sermon on the Cross of Christ, and enter into the subject with taste and relish, what beggary is the world to him. The subject is so high and so glorious, that a man must go out of himself, as it were, to apprehend it. The Apostle had such a view, when he said, 'I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.' I remem-

* "Germany, England and Scotland," pp. 19, 20.

ber the time, even after I became really serious in religion, when I could not understand what St. Paul meant—not by setting forth the glory of Christ, but by talking of it in such hyperbolical terms, and always dwelling upon the subject: whatever topic he began on, I saw that he could not but glide into the same subject. But I now understand why he did so, and wonder no more; for there is no other subject comparatively worthy of our thoughts, and therefore it is that advanced Christians dwell on little else. I am persuaded that the whole world becomes vain and empty to a man in proportion as he enters into living views of Jesus Christ."* And what is this but saying precisely what all the primitive disciples said again and again: "Whom having not seen we love, in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing in him, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory?"

But we believe that the mystery of the incarnation, or the manifestation of God in the person of Christ, can be justified not only to the affections, but to the intellect. Allowing, in the first instance, that there is a difficulty here, as there is in innumerable truths of a similar kind, it will require no effort to receive it either as a fact or as a doctrine.

In the first place, it meets a certain inherent want, not merely of our moral, but of our mental constitution. The mind can never be satisfied with abstractions; it demands living realities. To understand such abstractions it must

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* Cecil's Works, Vol. I, p. 50,—R. Carter's Edition

see them in their concrete form. What we call the conceptive or imaginative part of our nature, blends in all the workings of the intellect. The perfect union of the two gives us the highest mental power. We require not merely to know the truth, but to conceive it, to represent it to our minds, and thus make it our own. This process enters into faith, often described as the eye of the soul, which discerns the invisible. But faith is much more than an eye; it is a power, to some extent creative; being "the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for." The things believed have a reality without us, but can have no reality within us, until believed, or so strongly conceived, as to become substance, not only without but within. But abstractions, which are often little more than logical or mathematical forms, can never possess this substantial or living character. They cannot fill and satisfy the mind. To be really conceived and loved, the truth must be embodied. Beauty, goodness, truth, love, have scarce an existence for us until they are incarnated in forms that breathe and burn. Figures and symbols of every description, especially those which may be said to be alive, are connatural to the human mind. It must have them or perish. Language itself is but the embodiment of truth by means of inanimate signs or symbols. We require, however, more than words adequately to express great principles. We wish to see them alive and active. Idolatry, so universal, is but the abuse of this principle. It substitutes mean and degrading symbols of the Divinity for those which are true and elevating. It also confounds the symbol with the thing

symbolized, and thus adores the creature more than the Creator.

The whole material universe, in its unity, harmony and grandeur, is but a symbol or embodiment of God. Form and movement everywhere indicate spirit and power. Here the thoughts of God assume a concrete shape. We see them in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath. The material creation is thence a striking manifestation of the infinite Mind. But it is inanimate—it cannot feel; it cannot speak. It makes no response to our inquiries, yields no sympathy to our emotions. In a word, it has neither intellect nor heart. Some living form, then, is needed to give full expression or embodiment to the Divine character. It may be said, perhaps, that this want is supplied in man, the noblest image or symbol of the Almighty. Yes, but man has fallen; man everywhere is imperfect; "there is none that doeth good, no, not one." The temple is beautiful, but, alas! it is in ruins. The indwelling Divinity is gone! All is silence and desolation. The very ruins, indeed, give indication of the greatness and majesty of the Being they once enshrined. But this is all; the ideas they suggest are one-sided and imperfect. Man is not an adequate image of God. We need one purer, more august and impressive. Indeed, God must actually imbody himself in some perfect godlike form of man, for that, of all the forms in the universe, we can best understand. In no other way can he furnish that vivid and overpowering exhibition of his glory, fitted to subdue and transform our hearts.

Now this is precisely what God has done in the person of Christ. By a close and mysterious union with this "noblest form of man," he draws near to us, and discovers to our whole interior nature, all the fullness or perfection of the Godhead. Our Saviour is thence described as *the Image* of *the Invisible God*, or, which is the same thing, *God made visible*, *God manifested in the flesh*. This is the true and proper *Theophany*. The entire Godhead is here, not only revealed, but incarnated. We see his glory as in a mirror, whence it is reflected back again into our souls; as if the soul itself were another mirror to receive the Divine image in the face of Jesus.

Let an individual try to form an abstract idea of God, and the more he withdraws his mind from sensible objects, from air, and earth, and sky, the more bewildered does he find himself. What seemed distinct and vivid, fades into dim shadow. His thoughts, incapable of fixing themselves upon definite points, roam at random through infinite space. If the boundless immensity and terrible majesty of God are in any measure realized, it will be found, after all, that these conceptions are but the extension, and what we venture to call, the shadowy refinement of material objects, of suns, centres and systems, or the imaginary area of space, encircling, perhaps, in the centre, a magnificent throne, occupied by a majestic, bodily form. When all this is rejected as visionary and absurd, and the wayward mind is recalled to the reality of things, to the spirituality, infinity and eternity of God, it will turn out that while the intellect attaches definite ideas to these expressions, they are yet

cold and formal, and exert but little influence upon the soul.

But let God reveal himself in a nature like our own, and in that nature go forth to control all worlds, to quicken the dead, to regenerate the soul, and instantly we gain a conception of his majesty which overwhelms us. Let us behold him in the face of Jesus, radiant with the light of a boundless, unutterable love, and both our intellect and our heart humble themselves before the adorable mystery. Here is a Being we can understand and appreciate, moving and acting among ourselves, full of majesty and power, controlling the winds and the waves, healing the sick, raising the dead, regulating the world of spirits, overmastering the powers of evil, conquering death and the grave, and finally assuming the place of universal and eternal dominion. And yet, with all this power and supremacy, full of mercy and good fruits, infinite in love and compassion, blessing all, saving all; a man, with the heart and soul of a man, yet a God confessed, with all the might and majesty of a God; so that in gazing upon his glorified face, through which the whole Deity is shining, we exclaim, with an ancient prophet, "This God is my God, I have waited for him; this God is my God, I will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

This manifestation of the Godhead in Jesus Christ has no tendency whatever to destroy the Divine unity and supremacy. Indeed, it is the only thing which has maintained it in the world. It is only where the Godhead of Christ is proclaimed that the Divine Unity is known.

Abandon the Divinity of Christ, and you will soon find yourselves without a God. Nor has this view any tendency to materialize our conceptions of the Divine essence and character, as Dr. Channing and others claim. It is impossible that it should thus degrade the idea of an infinite and eternal Being. So far from this, it is the only means of bringing the idea of God within the range and scope of our thoughts, by imparting to it a luminousness and power fitted to seize our mind and affect our heart. Where is the spirituality of God maintained so tenaciously and successfully as among the most rigid Trinitarians? Both by experience and observation, Jesus Christ, as human and yet Divine, is proved to be "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." Even those who deny the Divinity of Christ, sometimes inadvertently, or without a due appreciation of the real force and application of their words, use language respecting Christ which fully justifies the highest view which can be taken of his Godhead. Thus Dr. Channing, in an Appendix to the fourth edition of his works, p. 527, says, "We believe that God dwelt in him, manifested himself through him, taught men by him, and communicated to him his Spirit without measure. We believe that Jesus Christ was the most glorious display, expression and representation of God to mankind, so that in seeing and knowing him, we see and know the invisible Father; so that when Christ came, God visited the world, and dwelt with men more conspicuously than at any former period. In Christ's words we hear God speaking; in his miracles we behold God acting;

in his character and life we see an unsullied image of God's purity and love."*

Besides, it may be asked, how could God manifest the peculiarities of his *moral* character, except by an incarnation? The works of nature alone are inadequate to this. While these exhibit his infinite power and wisdom, they cannot reveal his justice, his purity and compassion. Such attributes can only adequately discover themselves in moral action. Of course they are embodied, to some extent, in the course of human affairs, in the history of the race. But the lessons there are not always clear. They demand

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* The following extract from Dr. Channing's Life, Vol. I, p. 388, will throw further light upon this point. But how singularly inconsistent the position of this able and eloquent writer, in admitting the divinity of Christ, and yet denying him to be God incarnate; as if to be *divine* were something different from being *God*. "We agreed," says he, "in our late conference, that a majority of our brethren held that Jesus Christ is more than a man, that he existed before the world, that he literally came from heaven to save our race, that he sustains other offices than those of a teacher and witness to the truth, and that he still acts for our benefit, and is our intercessor with the Father. This we agreed to be the prevalent sentiment of our brethren." In the Appendix to the fourth edition of his works, a portion of which we have quoted in the text, he says: "We believe, then, in the Divinity of Christ as this term is often and properly used." p. 572. If Jesus Christ is, in any just sense of that term, *divine*, he is so far God, and thence worthy of all homage and worship. It is true, we often use the term, divine, in a loose and figurative sense; but the Scriptures never so use it. The distinction there, between the creature and the Creator, is marked and decisive. Man is only man; angel is only angel however exalted—never divine, never God, and consequently never worshipped as such. Any approach to such worship is rejected with horror. "See thou do it not," said the angel to St. John, when the latter fell at his feet, "for I am thy fellow-servant and one of the prophets." *Worship God!* is the uniform sentiment of Holy Writ. What, then, shall we think of the following, from Dr. Channing's address at Lenox, a few days before his death, in 1842: "The doctrine of the Word made flesh, shows us God uniting himself most intimately with our nature, manifesting himself in human form, for the very end of making us partakers of his own perfection. The doctrine of grace, as it is termed, reveals the infinite Father, imparting his Holy Spirit, the best gift he can impart to the humblest being who implores it." At the close he addresses a solemn prayer to Jesus Christ, as the Lord and Saviour of the race, which, under the circumstances, one can scarcely regard as a figure of speech, or a mere rhetorical flourish: "Come, friend and Saviour of the race, who didst shed thy blood upon the cross to reconcile man to man, and earth to Heaven!"

an interpretation from a higher source. Some Gospel must shed its light upon them. An abstract revelation upon the subject would not meet the case. Probably it would not be well understood. Certainly it would fail to make a deep moral impression. But look upon the life of Jesus; it is the life of God himself. Here he not only speaks, but acts; "glorious in holiness," "abundant in goodness," "forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin."

Finally, a great problem has to be solved. "How shall man be just with God?" Nature, society, philosophy, give no information here. A real difficulty has occurred. Man is a sinner—condemned, and in himself helpless. His natural moral instincts suggest the necessity of an atonement, a mediation, an intercession, on the ground of which God may be recognized as just, even while forgiving the sinner. But man cannot expiate his own guilt. One man cannot do so for another. An angel from heaven cannot give a ransom for the soul. The reparation to be made must bear some proportion to the magnitude of the offence and the grandeur of the Being against whom it has been committed. If it would be altogether unsuitable for a little German principality, or an insignificant village to offer its mediation between two great nations like France and England, how could man or angel sustain the responsibility of mediating between God and an apostate race? The Mediator in such a case must be equal to the occasion, and bear some relation to both parties. In the first place, he must be absolutely sinless, without the slightest imputation of participating in the guilt of man, "holy, harmless, unde-

filed, separate from sinners," and therefore infinitely more than a man, "higher than the heavens." He must also possess a special interest and connection with the Godhead, so as to maintain the rights of Jehovah, and give worth and efficacy to the atonement. To meet such an exigency, so peculiar and extraordinary, a peculiar and extraordinary nature is needed; a being, in fact, at once human and Divine, one who is the Son of man, and yet the Son of God. If this supposition involves something inexplicable, or mysterious, then we reply that the reality must involve something inexplicable and mysterious. Thus Jesus Christ, our Mediator, our High-Priest and Reconciler, is more than a man, more than all men and angels combined. As a Prince and a Saviour he has power with God, and prevails. He is one with God, he is one also with man; truly God, and truly man, a complete, all-sufficient Saviour. Though he was "in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God;" yet he "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." These are the things into which the angels desire to look. They turn away from the glorious fields of light, from suns and stars revolving in majesty and beauty, in the bosom of infinite space, to ponder these mysterious but sublime and cheering truths. "Unto the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known (made known) by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

But if angels take such an interest in the mystery of redemption, what shall a sinner, burdened with guilt, and ready to perish, feel, when gazing upon the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world? He turns away from all the glories of the starry heavens, from the verdure and beauty of the boundless regions of the earth, from all the discoveries of science, and all the splendors of poetry and art, to the one ineffable manifestation which God has made of himself in the person of Jesus Christ.

Sinner, weary and worn, toiling in the night of time, and ready to perish; sinner, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, yet failing to reach it; sinner, all fevered with anguish, and plunging fruitlessly to quench thy death-thirst in the boundless depths of human speculation; sinner, conscious of thine emptiness and poverty, and longing to reattach thy being to the infinite and immortal,—look and live! Behold thy Saviour—God, infinite in power, infinite in love and compassion! He dies for thee; he lives and reigns for thee! Sinner, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

"O, the sweet wonders of that cross,
Where God the Saviour lived and died;
Her noblest life my spirit draws
From thy dear wounds and bleeding side."

CHAPTER IV.

THEORIES OF THE INCARNATION.

It will naturally be inferred, from the positions already established, that we should strongly object to any theories, however plausible and splendid, proposing to explain the mystery of the incarnation, or of the sacred Trinity. We can form the idea of an infinite God, and can appreciate, in some slight degree, the sublime and affecting relations in which he stands to finite natures, finding thus a basis for a clear and well-defined system of religion. So, also, we can appreciate, yet more fully and distinctly, the relations in which Jesus Christ, as God manifest in the flesh, stands to our individual souls, and thence learn at once our duty and our destiny. Relying upon him as our Redeemer, the soul's true and everlasting Life, we can feel secure and happy in the prospect of eternity. But we cannot safely speculate upon his essential nature, and especially upon his relations to the Godhead. There we find the limits of our powers. Our curiosity, indeed, intense and insatiable as that of others, may long to pass the limits of our being, into the region of the unknown and ineffable. But we are satisfied that the thing is impossible, perhaps undesirable; and therefore we content ourselves with what slight discoveries we can make on the shores of the mighty abyss.

Indeed, we are fully persuaded that it is one of the highest attainments of wisdom to feel and confess its ignorance. We are strongly inclined, therefore, with one or two slight modifications, to adopt the sentiments of Pascal, who says, "The sciences have two extremities, which touch each other. The one is that pure natural ignorance in which we are born; the other is that point to which great minds attain, who, having gone the whole round of possible knowledge, find that they know nothing, (comparatively,) and that they end in (much) the same ignorance in which they began. But it is an intelligent ignorance which knows itself. Those who have come forth from their native ignorance, and have not reached this other extreme, are tinged with scientific conceit, and claim to be learned and intelligent. These are the men that disturb the world, and that judge more falsely of every thing than others."* Hence, he says, in another place, "The highest attainment of reason is to know that there is an infinity of knowledge beyond its reach."† Every one has heard of the saying of Newton, in reference to his vast attainments,—that he felt as a child gathering pebbles on the shores of the vast ocean of human knowledge stretching beyond him. "What we know is little," says the profound La Place; "what we are ignorant of is immense."‡ This, spoken of human science, is especially applicable to Theology. The higher our discoveries, the more profound and awful appears that

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* *Thoughts*, p. 107. English translation. † *Thoughts*, p. 255.
‡ Hist. Nat. Philosophy, 378.

boundless ocean of being and thought by which we are encircled.

We know from Revelation that Jesus Christ is Divine; we know, too, that there is some distinction, essential or relative, in the nature of the Deity, for the manifestation of him as the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, or what we denominate, for the want of a better term, the Sacred Trinity; we know, moreover, that this Trinity is perfectly consistent with unity; but we know nothing of the Divine essence, or manner of existence, and cannot therefore define the nature of this Trinity in Unity, or Tri-unity, as we sometimes phrase it. The whole question transcends us. It stands alone, without analogies or illustrations, in nature and science, a glorious but unfathomable mystery. Here we cannot reason, either from finite matter, or finite spirit, from the nature of the universe, or the nature of man. Consequently no formula in human language can adequately express the mystery. Our being and mode of existence may be, indeed must be, essentially different from the Divine; for by no approximation can the finite be made identical with the infinite. Even if it were maintained that the human soul is an emanation of the Divine—a vague and unsatisfactory mode of expression—it could not be proved to be Divine, in any strict or adequate sense of the word. There can be only one infinite, uncreated Being. All others are finite, created, dependent and changeable. In other words, they are the production of the Almighty, and entirely dependent upon his support. Doubtless in the possession of intellect and will, of consciousness and moral

feeling, they may resemble God; but it is absolutely impossible they should, in essential constitution and mode of being. All our ideas, however, of personality, of individual consciousness and will, of separate and single existence, are derived from the finite nature of man; and of course, we cannot well conceive of the union and identity in one man, of three distinct yet harmonious personalities. For that is simply to say, that in *one* person there are *three* persons, which is a contradiction. We can conceive of two or more elements in his constitution, the union, for example, of the physical and spiritual elements; but we have no ground for saying that this bears any close or adequate resemblance to the union of three spiritual natures in one infinite essence, or even of the union of the human with the Divine, in the person of Jesus Christ. This latter, however, is conceivable enough; for here are two natures in *one* person. It involves no contradiction, no absurdity. Ascending to the absolute nature of God, we lose the very idea of personality, except as given us by God himself. Still his personality is conceivable enough; God must ever reveal himself to us in the form of a person, with attributes corresponding to those of a human being, that is, with a distinct consciousness, intelligence and will. But when we come to speak of three persons, or three hypostases in God, we are beyond our depth, and attach either a false or an indefinite idea to the expression. We are applying to God, finite ideas, and finite forms of speech. Change their import, if you can, give them an infinite character, if possible, and what have you? Three persons? No! Three

beings? No. One only remains—the one infinite, everlasting God. Indeed, words applied in this connection have no meaning at all. For, to use or apply a word correctly or adequately, we must understand the thing, the fact, principle or idea which it represents. But here we know nothing. Of personality among men, we know something; perhaps, however, less than we suppose; and may express the idea in appropriate forms of speech. But of personality in God, we are altogether ignorant. It may differ essentially from all our preconceptions, and involve relations and ideas beyond the grasp of created intelligence. Even in regard to the thoughts and ways of God, we see through a glass darkly, and know only in part; how much more in regard to his boundless essence, his indivisible eternal Being!

All reasoning, then, about personal distinctions, hypostases, or hypostatical unions, and above all, about the possibility of an infinite or eternal emanation from the Being of God, or an eternal generation of the Son from the Father, as light from the sun, water from the fountain, or thought from the mind, appears to us the gravest trifling, the most absurd logomachy. Among human beings, three persons or hypostases are three distinct and independent individuals with three minds, three wills, and three consciousnesses, which cannot, by any possibility, be made one, except in design and action. We can conceive of no mode of extinguishing or blending these separate personal identities. But what may take place in an infinite essence, what grounds of distinction may exist in the first great

Cause of all things, or what modes of manifestation may best correspond to his real nature and being, we know nothing. That there is one God, the Father of spirits, holy and ever-blessed, unchangeable and immortal, we know. That Jesus Christ, described as his only-begotten Son, is God manifest in the flesh, we know. That these two, the Father and the Son, God invisible, and God manifest in the flesh, are one, we know. That the Father sends the Son, loves the Son, and co-operates with him in the work of redemption; in a word, that there is a sufficient basis of some kind, in the nature of the Godhead, to admit of the distinction expressed by the terms I, Thou, He, in application to the one and the other, we also know. But the I, Thou and He, so far as they indicate what we call distinct personalities, seem to be lost in the indivisible essence of the eternal God. The one is equal with the other; in this respect, the Godhead of the Son is the Godhead of the Father; and the only distinction that is really palpable to us, really comprehensible by us, is that the one is God in the Spirit, or God the Father, the other God in the flesh, or God the Son. None, even of those who are hyper-orthodox, deny that the *union* between them, and therefore the essential identity, is complete. For these *two*, or if including the Holy Spirit, "these *three* are *one*"—one living and true God. Here, then, is a visible distinction, which we can understand and express in words; but it would be presumption in us to deny that, corresponding to this visible and comprehensible distinction, there is another invisible and incomprehensible, in the very nature of the Divine essence and mode of existence,

which forms an unchangeable basis for the revelation of God, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

This is certainly conceivable. It seems to be plainly taught in the Word of God. With inconsiderable exceptions, it is held by the Church universal. It is maintained by some of the ablest men that ever lived, and cannot very well be supposed to involve any thing contradictory and absurd. It has greatly assisted to form a clear and lofty conception of the Divine glory. Indeed, some have thought that it is only by ascending to God through Jesus Christ, as Revealer and Mediator, that we can form any just conceptions of his greatness, and, above all, of his grace. "In the person of the Mediator," says Lord Bacon, who thinks that God must ever manifest himself to all created beings by a Mediator, "the true ladder is fixed whereby God may descend to his creatures, and his creatures may ascend to God; so that God, by the reconcilement of the Mediator, turning his countenance towards his creatures, (though not in equal light and degree,) made way unto the dispensation of his holy and most sacred will; whereby some of his creatures might stand, and keep their state; others might possibly fall and be restored; and others might fall and not be restored to their state, but yet remain in being under wrath and corruption: all, with respect to the Mediator, which is the great mystery and perfect centre of all God's ways with his creatures, and to which all his other works and wonders do but serve and infer."* The distinction here

* This passage occurs in a solemn confession of faith, the whole of which deserves an attentive perusal. Bacon's Works, Vol. II., p. 407.

referred to by Bacon, is that which exists between a God absolute and a God manifested, whether in the creation of the world, or in the incarnation of Christ. But how far beyond our powers!—how impalpable to our reason!—how impossible to be grasped, or explained, is a distinction like that! "Such knowledge is wonderful—it is high—we cannot attain unto it."

Enough, we think, has been said, to show that the position with which we set out is a just one, namely, that we are incompetent to speculate upon this subject; and that no theory, proposing its elucidation, can possess the slightest claim to our respect. As we are not omniscient, we must bear our ignorance as best we can.

But in all times, ingenious men, dissatisfied with the necessary limits of human knowledge, have imagined the possibility of elucidating this mystery, and, in some instances, have projected plausible but utterly opposing theories to account for it. "These over-bold and adventurous intruders," as John Howe aptly styles them, "into the deep and most profound arcana of the Divine nature," have either torn away the mystery entirely, or covered it with a deeper and more impenetrable shadow—some boldly denying the Tri-unity of God, and others involving that truth in a labyrinth of dazzling and unmeaning subtleties. "But it would be an over-officious and too meanly servile religiousness," as Howe admirably remarks, "to be awed by the sophistry of scholastic wits, into a subscription to their confident determinations concerning the being of God, that such and such things are necessary or impossible thereto

beyond what the plain, undisguised reason of things, or his own express Word, do evince; to imagine a sacredness in their rash conclusions, so as to be afraid of searching into them; or of examining whether they have any firm and solid ground or bottom; to allow the schools the making of our Bible or the forming of our Creed, who license (and even sport) themselves to philosophize upon the nature of God, with as petulant and irreverent a liberty as they would upon a worm, or any of the meanest insect, while yet they can pronounce little with certainty, even concerning that, hath nothing in it, either of the Christian or the man. It well becomes us, as well as concerns us, to disencumber our minds, and release them from the entanglements of their unproved dictates. * * * The more reverence we have of God, the less we are to have for such men as have themselves expressed little."*

Perhaps it is inevitable that the prevalent philosophy, or the prevalent opinions of the age, should modify our views of theological truth. This, however, has been the great snare of speculative minds, and the chief source of their one-sided and erroneous views. An anxiety to justify the peculiarities of the Christian system, has tempted its friends, those especially of a literary or philosophical turn, to bring these into harmony with the prevalent form of literature and philosophy. In the early ages of the Church, we see little or nothing of this. The first Christians took only a practical view of religion, and devoutly adored Jesus Christ

* Howe's Works, p. 137.

as God incarnate. The ancient Church hymns, and the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, which come down to the middle, or perhaps to the latter part of the second century, recognize this great truth, but only in a devout or practical way. Justin Martyr, who was a converted Greek philosopher, is the first in whom we discover any philosophical or speculative tendency, or any labored attempt to justify the doctrines of Christianity in the eyes of Grecian poetry or metaphysics.* We have been looking over his writings, and have been struck with the evidence of this in almost every page. He attempts to justify Christianity, not only to the philosophy of Plato and others, but to the poetry and mythology of Greece—making long extracts from the writings of the dramatists and other poets, in corroboration of its claims. Of course he shows the infinite superiority of the Christian religion, but rejoices to discover any resemblance or analogy between the two. It is well known that Plato, in his lofty speculations, taught a sort of Trinity, but one different, in some respects, from any thing revealed in the sacred Scriptures. He had first the uncreated and absolute God, then his understanding, self-consciousness, or self-reflection, the Logos or Reason; and thirdly, the Creator or animal soul of the world; so that in Plato's Triad it was easy to see some correspondence with the Christian doctrine of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.† Justin Martyr seizes

* Justin belonged to the second century.

† We have not space to enter into the discussion of this point. But those who wish to see the whole subject discussed, with great learning and ability, may consult Cudworth's "Intellectual System;" particularly the latter part of the first volume. Cud-

upon this, and declares, in several places, "that the Son is in God, what the understanding (νοῦς) is in man, and that the Holy Spirit is that Divine power to act and execute, which Plato calls αρετή." He makes a similar application of Plato's *Logos* to Jesus Christ, as the Son of God. But as Plato's *Logos* and his *Soul of the World* were created beings, Justin seems to hold a similar view with reference to the dependence and creation of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. He maintains their Divinity; but it is evidently a created or derived Divinity, which is a contradiction in terms.*

This philosophising tendency is yet more strikingly developed in Tertullian, who was well versed in Greek and Roman learning, and possessed an imaginative, earnest and powerful mind. In his Apology, he uses the following illustration and appeal: "God created the world by his Word, his reason and his power. You philosophers yourselves admit that the *Logos*, the Word and reason, is the

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worth, who was an enthusiastic admirer of Plato, points out, in several particulars, the difference between the Platonic Trinity, particularly as held by the Neo Platonists, and the Christian Trinity, (pp. 735, 740, 774–5.) The points of coincidence between the various Trinities, as taught by Pythagoras, Zeno, Plato and others, are sufficiently curious and striking, and deserve an attentive study. Some interesting quotations upon this subject may be found in Dacier's Oeuvres de Platon, and in the first part of Cheateaubriand's "Genie Du Christianisme." "In the Epinomis, and elsewhere," says Dacier, "Plato lays down as principles, the first Good; the Word or the Understanding, and the Soul. The first Good is God; the Word or the Understanding is the Son of this First Good, by whom he was begotten, co-equal with himself; and the Soul, which is the middle term between the Father and the Son, is the Holy Ghost."

Oeuvres de Platon Traduits par Dacier.

* See Justin Martyr's Λογῶς προς Ελλήνας, Oratio ad Græccos. Works, Otto's Ed., Vol. I., p. 10. Also, Cohortatio, pp. 29, 68, 106. Apologia, Vol. I., pp. 160, 164. Especially pp. 180, 184, 208, 252. Consult, also, Neander's Church History, Vol. I., p. 585; and Knapp's Theology, p. 150.

Creator of the universe. The Christians merely add that the proper substance of the Word and of reason, that substance by which God produced all things, is the *Spirit;* that this word must have been pronounced by God; that being pronounced, it was generated by him; that consequently it is the *Son* of God, and God by reason of the unity of the substance. If the sun shoots forth a ray, his substance is not separated, but extended. Thus the Word is *Spirit* of a Spirit, and *God* of God, like a light kindled at another light. Thus whatever proceeds from God is *God*, and the two, with their spirit, form but one, differing in properties, not in number; in order, not in nature. The Son sprang from his principle without being separated from it. Now the ray of the Divinity descended into the womb of the virgin, invested itself with flesh, and became man, united with God. This flesh, supported by the Spirit, was nourished, grew, spake, taught, acted: it was Christ."*

This is ingenious and striking, and, withal, remarkably

* The above quotation may be found in Tertullian's "*Apologeticus Adversus Gentes, etc:* (21.) Gersdorf's Bibliotheca Patrum, Lat. Vol. iv. p. 87. It is as follows: "Jam ediximus Deum universitatem hanc mundi verbo, et ratione et virtute molitum. Apud vestros quoque sapientes *λόγον* id est sermonem, atque rationem, constat artificem videri universitatis. * * * * Et nos etiam sermoni atque rationi, per quæ omnia molitum Deum ediximus, propriam substantiam spiritum inscribimus, cui et sermo insit pronuntianti, et ratio adsit disponenti, et virtus præsit perficienti. Hunc ex Deo prolatum didicimus, et prolatione generatum, et idcirco filium Dei et Deum dictum ex unitate substantiæ. Nam et Deus spiritus. Et cum ex sole porrigitur, portio ex summa; sed sol erit in radio, quia solis est radius, nec separatur substantia, sed extenditur. Ita de spiritu spiritus, et de Deo, Deus, ut lumen de lumine accensum. Manet integra et indefecta materiæ matrix, etsi plures inde traduces qualitatum mutueris: ita, et quod de Deo profectum est Deus est, et Dei filius, et unus ambo. Ita et de spiritu spiritus, et de Deo Deus modulo alterum, non numero, gradu, non statu fecit, et a matrice non recessit, sed excessit. Iste igitur Dei radius, ut retro semper predicabatur delapsus in virginem quandam, et in utero ejus caro figuratus, nascitur homo Dei mistus. Caro spiritu instructa nutritur, adolescit, affatur, docet, operatur et Christus est."

well expressed. Moreover it contains a vein of truth; but it is too theoretical and fanciful to be received as a whole. It appeals more to the imagination than the reason, and is destitute of plain scriptural proof. It acknowledges the Divinity of Christ, for this is a truth which Tertullian most strenuously taught; but it makes Christ more of an attribute than an essence, a creature than a Creator. It acknowledges, indeed, his substance, and speaks of him as "Spirit of Spirit, God of God," and so far conforms to the teachings of the Scriptures; but plunges into hypothesis and fancy, when it represents Christ as "a ray from the Divinity, incarnating itself in the flesh of Jesus Christ." Indeed, Tertullian, like most of the philosophers of his age, was mystified by the theory of *emanation*, as if God, like the sun, or like a fountain, continually throws out from himself both matter and spirit, and that these consequently partake of the nature of God. This was the great error of the Gnostics, and of the Neo Platonists, of Clement, Origen, and Arius, all of whom, while acknowledging the Divinity of Christ, made him an *emanation* or a *creation* of God—light of light—spirit of spirit, as they would say, flowing eternally from God, or separated from him by the act of incarnation. Athanasius himself, who cherished the clearest ideas of the absolute and supreme Divinity of Jesus Christ, did not rid his mind of the prevalent notions, and hence speculates with astonishing boldness and ingenuity upon the subject of an eternal generation—a constant and changeless birth or emanation of God from God, of Spirit from Spirit, as thought from the mind, or light from the sun. He sees

and acknowledges the profound and inscrutable mystery; but somehow wishes to place it in some natural or plausible light, and so bewilders himself with an intricate and splendid theory, which, after all, turns upon a mere figure of speech, or a play upon words.

For centuries the whole Christian world was agitated with this discussion between the theories of Arius and Athanasius; all, however, with slight exceptions, as in the case of Paul of Samosota, acknowledging the real Godhead and Supremacy of Christ, Arians and Athanasians alike uniting in his worship. The Arians, however, insisted upon an actual creation of Jesus Christ, by the eternal God, and his consequent inferiority to the Father. They acknowledged him to be the first and greatest of all creatures, nay, Divine and worthy of all trust and homage; but still a creature, with a nature resembling that of God, but not actually identical with it. In a word, they held the gross absurdity, of a created, limited and subaltern God. But believing the theory of *emanation*, or, as they called it, spiritual generation, they saw no inconsistency in the idea of God producing God, or of a creature occupying the place, and performing the functions of Jehovah. Many of them were certainly pious, and worshipped Jesus Christ as the true God and eternal life.

The followers of Athanasius became the dominant party; and his Creed, adopted by the Council of Nice, was finally acknowledged as the belief of the Catholic Church. It has been adopted, with slight modifications, into all the Creeds of Christendom, and may be regarded as the formal belief,

both of the ancient and of the modern Church.* In its main features it is undoubtedly scriptural, and might, with a slight mental reserve, be adopted by every candid believer in the supreme Divinity and incarnation of Christ. As defended, however, by Athanasius, especially as understood by himself, it involves a *theory* of the Trinity and Incarnation, which, simply because it is a theory, ought to be rejected. Its form of expression is figurative and theoretical, and may be understood in different senses; but those who have studied it the most carefully, will allow that it involves a speculation on the nature of God, of the Divine procession of the Son from the Father, and of the Holy Ghost, from the Father and the Son, which may or may not be true. In our judgment, however, it is too vague to be true; for what do we know of "eternal generation," of Divine procession; and what definite idea do the expressions, God of God, Light of Light, Spirit of Spirit, convey to our minds? Athanasius was undoubtedly a great man—one of the greatest, indeed, that the Church can boast. He had astonishing vigor. penetration and grasp of

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* The following is the Nicene Creed:

"I believe in God Almighty, the Maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, that is of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, of the same substance with the Father, by whom all things were made that are in heaven and that are in earth; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, became incarnate, was made man, suffered, rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. And I believe in the Holy Ghost, (the Lord, the quickener,—το Κυριον, το Ζῶοποιὸν,—who cometh forth from the Father:) who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified; who spake by the prophets," etc.

The above is a literal rendering of the Nicene Creed. The original may be seen in Knapp's Theology, p. 154, or in the second volume of Neander's Church History.

What is strictly called "The Athanasian Creed," differs from the Nicene, and was not written by Athanasius. It belongs to a later age.

mind; a clear, nervous style; an earnest and overpowering eloquence. Moreover, he was thoroughly honest, fully persuaded of the truth himself, and deeply penetrated with its life-giving power. "His deep mind, his noble heart, his invincible courage, his living faith, his unbounded benevolence, sincere humility, lofty eloquence, and strictly virtuous life, gained the honor and love of all."* He cherished, also, the highest reverence for the Word of God, and based his doctrines on the express teachings of Inspiration; but he was a keen controversialist, as well as a bold and subtle theorist. With immense dialectical force, and great subtlety of conception, he felt that no subject was beyond his grasp, and played with the most awful mysteries, as a child with beautiful but dangerous toys. Reverent, indeed, always serious, always devout, but bold, hazardous and keen, dashing into the very depths of nature and God, and overwhelming his opponents with argument and eloquence. His imagination got the better of his judgment, and he discerned, or imagined he discerned, the logical necessity for an *eternal generation or procession* of the Son from the Father. "Begotten, not made;" "generated not fashioned," he saw, as it were, the everlasting procession of the Divine from the Divine—an ever-streaming radiance—an ever-burning glory, flowing forth like light from the stars, or rays from the sun!

We all allow, of course, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, in a higher relation than pertains to his merely human generation, or earthly life; for this the Scriptures expressly

* *Conversations Lexicon*—Article, Athanasius.

teach; and it was this fact which gave force and plausibility to the theory of Athanasius; but the name, Son of God, though higher than any other in the universe, expresses simply the fact of his peculiar *relation* to the Godhead; in other words, the fact of his supreme Divinity; but it gives no light as to the *mode* of that relation, and teaches nothing about an eternal generation or procession. In this very point lies that *fathomless mystery*, of which we have so frequently spoken, and into which it is worse than folly to try to penetrate. The theory, then, of Athanasius, associated, as it is, with the creed of Christendom, and venerable for its age and apparently scriptural basis, must be abandoned with other fancies of good men, which obscure rather than illuminate the truth. His belief, touching the supreme Godhead of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, we admit as our own; and venerate, from our inmost heart, his noble and successful efforts in defence of the truth. But his theorizing upon this great *mystery*, we renounce as mist amid the sunlight, or clouds upon the face of the sky. "Who can, by searching, find out God?" Who can discover the union of the Father with the Son, or reveal the secret of his uncreated being, his everlasting essence? Not Arius; not Athanasius; not even Paul. Moreover, the great Apostle was too wise to make the attempt. He but announces the fact, and adores the mystery.

Sabellius, a bold and reckless thinker, cut the knot of the difficulty, and maintained that the Trinity had no foundation in the Divine Essence, and that it derived its import simply from its relations to our minds, or rather to the dif-

ferent parts or offices in the work of human redemption. In his view, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are the same eternal God, only in different aspects and offices. Of course, he maintained the absolute Divinity of Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, and so far, was abundantly orthodox; but he discarded all mystery in the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the incarnation of Christ. This, then, as all will see, is a mere *theory*, which contradicts some of the plainest teachings of God's Word, and is made "for the nonce," as the old writers say; in other words, to get rid of a difficulty. Better far confess our ignorance, and adore the infinite depths of the Divine essence and glory. "The Word was *with* God"—and not only so, but "was God." How? We know not; and that is all we can say. No theory will meet the case. Athanasius and Sabellius, are equally at fault here.

The Nicene, or Athanasian creed, has been generally held both in ancient and modern times. It is thoroughly incorporated into the popular theology, and forms an element in the belief of almost every Christian sect. Modified, in slight particulars, and with a liberal construction, it may be said to be the belief of Christendom. Individuals, however, even among those who have professed to hold it as the creed of the church, have occasionally departed from its spirit, and indulged in theories of their own. The prevalent philosophy, in this respect, has greatly affected their minds. Thus the great Bossuet, who was an enthusiastic admirer of Plato and of the Cartesian philosophy, has given us a theory, or an explanation of the Trinity, more

akin to the fancies of Tertullian and Justin Martyr, than the plain teachings of the Scriptures. "If we impose silence on our senses," says he, "and retire for a short time into the recesses of our soul, that is to say, to that part where the voice of truth is heard, we shall there perceive a sort of image of the Trinity whom we adore. Thought, which we feel produced as the offspring of our mind, as the son of our understanding, gives us some idea of the Son of God, conceived from all eternity in the intelligence of the celestial Father. For this reason, the Son of God assumes the name of the Word, to intimate that he is produced in the bosom of the Father, not as bodies are generated, but as the inward voice that is heard within our souls, and arises there when we contemplate the truth.

"But the fertility of the mind does not stop at this inward voice, at this intellectual thought, at this image of the truth that is formed within us. We love both this inward voice and the intelligence which gives it birth; and while we love them, we feel within us something that is not less precious to us than intelligence and thought, that is the fruit of both, that unites them and unites with them, and composes with them one and the same existence.

"Thus, as far as there can be any resemblance between God and man, is produced in God the eternal love which springs from the Father who thinks, and the Son who is his thought, to compose with him and his thought one and the same nature, equally happy and equally perfect."*

* Histoire Universelle, I. p. 248.

Here we see a lively reproduction of the Platonic Trinity, the Essential God—his intelligence (*nous*,) or understanding, begotten of him, and uniting in the production of the soul of the world. Thus speculations circulate through the ages, and the thoughts of great men become incorporated with the universe of mind. It was well, however, that Bossuet remarked that, in his beautiful representation of the human mind, with its diverse elements and inward harmony, is seen only "a *sort* of image of the Trinity." With this concession, we may accept it as ingenious and agreeable.

The prevalent and fashionable philosophy of the nineteenth century, particularly in Germany and France, and, to some extent, in England and in this country, is a modified spiritualism, which finds its most rational and agreeable exposition in the eclecticism of Victor Cousin. It has been adopted, with more or less modification, by nearly all the German theologians. Schleiermacher, who translated Plato, and formed his whole system of theology on a philosophical basis, gave rise to a theory of the Trinity which is quite prevalent among modern theologians. He finds Religion to consist in the union of the finite with the infinite, doubtless a great truth, properly explained and understood. On this ground, we must find the infinite in Christ. He therefore insists strongly on his proper Divinity or Godhead. But he first recognizes the *absolute God*, to us the impersonal, the unknown, and the inaccessible. This absolute God must manifest himself; and thence he passes over from the absolute into the

relative, from the infinite into the finite. God reproduces himself, so to speak, in a new and visible form, and becomes, in some sense, a new Being. This is the Logos, the Christ, the Son of God; in other words, God himself, who created the universe, and became incarnate in order to bring man into union and fellowship with the infinite, and thus redeem him from the bondage of sin. A *theory*, beautiful in itself, and doubtless with some elements of truth, but still a *theory*, which leaves the great mystery just where it was before, and mystifies us with words which have no definite import.*

But this furnishes a fair specimen of the manner in which the doctrine of the Trinity is regarded by the philosophers and theologians of Germany. The Hegelians, even, have a Trinity: the Me and not the Me, and the relation between them; in other words, Absolute Being, and Relative Being, and the union of the two, or the middle term which unites them. So they talk very profoundly of absolute Being, or the absolute God, who is entirely inaccessible to our minds, as without thought, without feeling, without action; in a word, without anything which is tangible to our minds; of the absolute Being "struggling to reveal himself," passing over into the finite, reproducing himself in the universe of matter and of mind, first representing himself to himself, coming into self-consciousness, creating his own image, and then going forth, to embody his glory

* These views are developed in his "Weihnachtsfeier," and "Glaubenslehre." See Morell's History of Philosophy, pp. 618, 619.

in the world, in man, in Christ, manifesting himself especially in Christ.

But what pure hypothesis is this! What bewildering verbiage! Absolute Being! Absolute God! God without thought, without feeling, without design, without action! There is no such God. There never was such a God.* He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever—evermore the holy, evermore the good, the wise, the blessed. He speaks, and it is done; he says, Let their be light! and there is light. Earth and sky, the sun, moon, and stars—this great and beautiful universe starts into being at his bidding, and reflects his glory. But God is evermore above it, and beyond it, the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever.

But this idea of absolute Being passing over into the finite and formal, reproducing himself in the universe, has a peculiar charm to imaginative minds, and has greatly modified the theological teaching of Germany. It affected the mind of Coleridge, who thinks, (see "Aids to Reflection,") that there is a natural or philosophical necessity for a Trinity, or at least for the incarnation of Jesus Christ in human form. Some even among ourselves have talked learnedly about the absolute God,—his self-consciousness—self-reflection, or self-imagination, as if the latter were the *Logos*, the Son of God,—of God *struggling* to reveal himself in the finite,—of his being first *inworlded* and then incarnated; as if expressions and speculations of this sort could throw the slightest light on the great mystery of the Godhead,

* "Before the mountains were brought forth, ere ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God!" Ps. xc. 1, 2.

in human flesh. Doubtless much truth may mingle with speculations of this kind, striking views, interesting arguments, and spirit-stirring pictures; but, alas! we are just where we were years ago, and where we must ever remain, at least as long as we are in the flesh, on the brink of a vast abyss, a mystery of Godliness, into which the angels desire to look.*

It must not be inferred from what we have said, that among the German theologians, or those who sympathise with them in this country, there are no just and scriptural views of the incarnation and Godhead of Christ. Indeed, many of them hold these truths very intelligently, and even in their speculations, some of which are fanciful enough, have shed upon them an interesting light. Schleiermacher has done much to uproot the cold rationalism which prevailed in his day; while Neander and Tholuck have carried forward the reform which he commenced. The statement of this doctrine by Neander is striking and instructive, although it involves too much of merely speculative theory. "It is this doctrine," he says, "by which God becomes known as the original fountain of all existence; as He by whom the rational creation, that had become es-

* The following, from Lord Bacon, deserves the consideration of all theorists: "As for perfection or completeness in Divinity, it is not to be sought. For he that will reduce a science, a knowledge into an art, will make it round and uniform; but in Divinity, many things must be left abrupt, and concluded with, thus: 'O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!' So, again, the Apostle saith; 'We know in part;' and to have the form of a total where there is matter but for a part, cannot be without supplies by supposition and presumption."—Works, Vol. i. p. 241.

"The contemplation of God's creatures and works produceth (having regard to the works and creatures themselves,) knowledge; but having regard to God, no perfect knowledge, but *wonder*, which is broken knowledge."—p. 163.

tranged from him, is brought back to fellowship with him; and as He in the fellowship with whom it from thenceforth subsists:—the threefold relation in which God stands to mankind, as primal ground, mediator and end, Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, in which threefold relation the whole Christian knowledge of God is completely announced. Accordingly, all is herein embraced by the Apostle Paul, when he names the one God and Father of all, who is above all, and works through all, and in all; (Ephes. iv: 6;) or Him from whom are all things;—when, in pronouncing the benediction, he sums up all in the formula: the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit. God as the living God, the God of mankind, and the God of the Church, can be known truly only in this way. This shape of Theism presents the perfect mean between the wholly extra-mundane God of Deism, and the God brought down to, and confounded with, the world of Pantheism."*

* History, Vol. I. p. 572. *Dr. Sartorius*, in his little work on the *Person and Work of Christ*, defends the common view, but not without a tincture of philosophical speculation. Nor is his discussion as thorough and discriminating as, from its reputation, we were led to expect. He defends the unity, and identity of the sacred Trinity, and adds:—"The difference is only this, that there is attributed to the Father an absolute self-existence by himself alone; to the Son the same, with an eternal communication with the Father; and to the Holy Spirit, the same, by an eternal communication with the Father and the Son; as when a light, when it is doubled or trebled, shines in the first place by itself, and in the second place reflects contemporaneously with it out of a mirror, and thirdly, with the reflection shines also again upon another mirror, and yet it is only one light. There is afforded to us, also, the simplest explanation, under the figure of a triangle, since these three angles, in various ways, make up one and the same space." This will do to put along with Martin Farquhar Tupper's string of natural triads, among which are the *triangle* and the *trefoil*, as symbols of the Trinity. Strange, that even minds of ordinary sagacity can beguile themselves or their readers with such absurdity!

Neander, however, makes a just distinction between the ontological or speculative view of the Trinity, and the one which he calls economic or practical; the former, as he says, being an intellectual process of development, passing through various changes, and in the history of theological investigation gradually absorbing the practical. On this ground we conclude that the ontological view is a matter of entire uncertainty; while the practical one is the true and scriptural view, which ought to lie at the basis of all our faith. "This," adds Neander, "constituted from the beginning, the fundamental consciousness of the Catholic church, while forming itself in its conflict with the opposite theories of the heretical sects. It is that which forms the basis of the true unity of the church, and the identity of the Christian consciousness in all ages."*

We turn, then, with infinite relish to this economic, or practical view, which, without speculation or theory of any kind, finds and adores God in Jesus Christ, and thence derives the soul's true and everlasting life. This is the

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* Church History, Vol. I. p. 573.

At the close of the second century, Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, in his work, Adversus Hæres., says, "The church, although scattered throughout the world, has received from the Apostles and their disciples, the faith in one God, the Father Almighty, etc.; and in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation, and in the Holy Spirit, who by the prophets revealed the dispensations—and the advent, the generation from a virgin, the suffering and the raising from the dead, and the bodily ascension unto heaven, of the beloved Jesus Christ our Lord; and his coming from heaven in the glory of the Father, to renew all things, and raise up again to life every human being;—that to Christ Jesus our Lord and God, our Saviour and King, according to the good pleasure of the Father invisible, every knee may bow, and every tongue confess." Adver. Hæres. Lib. 1. Cap. 2.

So long as this practical view continued, the church was spiritual and prosperous; but as soon as it was superseded by the speculative or philosophical view of the Doctors, the church grew languid and worldly.

Pauline view, as Neander would say, the view also of Peter and John, of all the Apostles and primitive disciples. It must, then, be the true view; the view, especially, which gives peace, and hope, and joy to a penitent sinner. "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." This is the hope, this the repose of the spirit, sin-burdened and sorrowful. In this connection, how full of meaning the words of our Saviour,—"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!" How natural and becoming, also, that fine old prayer, of mingled thanksgiving and supplication, addressed to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, the *Te Deum Laudamus*, as it is called:

"We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord. All the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting. To thee all Angels cry aloud; the Heavens and all the Powers therein. To thee, Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; Heaven and Earth are full of the Majesty of thy Glory. The glorious company of the Apostles praise thee. The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise thee. The noble army of Martyrs praise thee. The holy Church, throughout all the world, doth acknowledge thee, the Father of an infinite Majesty; Thine adorable, true, and only Son; also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ. Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father. When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man, thou didst humble thyself to be born of a Virgin. When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst

open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. Thou sittest on the right hand of God, in the Glory of the Father. We believe that thou shalt come to be our Judge. We therefore pray thee, help thy servants, whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood. Make them to be numbered with thy Saints, in glory everlasting. O Lord, save thy people, and bless thine heritage. Govern them, and lift them up forever. Day by day we magnify thee; and we worship thy Name ever, world without end."*

* Book of Common Prayer.

CHAPTER V.

THE ATONEMENT.

Sin is the separation of a soul from God. Whatever, then, be our views as to its origin, its action, or its mode of transmission in the world, we must allow that it is the negative of all goodness—the antagonism, so to speak, of all that is perfect and divine. Sin, therefore, necessarily severs the soul from its centre and its end, which is the same thing as to say, that it is the soul's everlasting death. "The wages of sin is death." This is not simply a matter of revelation, but of actual observation and experience. Man has sinned—sinned deeply and grievously. Nor does it affect the state of the case, whether he has sinned as an individual, or as a race. The mournful fact remains the same. "By one man," says the Apostle Paul, "sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that *all* have sinned."* Everywhere, in all times, and among all nations, this fact strikes us. Without a revelation—in other words, without a Gospel, man is an idolater or an atheist. The race is unregenerate. In this respect, they form a whole. The stream rushes in one direction. In a word, man is apostate—in a state of *apos-*

* Epis. Rom. v. 12.

tasis, or voluntary removal from God. The ship has broken from its moorings, and is adrift upon the wide ocean, without helm or compass, tossed by wind and wave, and without the power of reaching

> "That peaceful shore,
> Where tempests never beat, nor billows roar."

"The whole world," says the Apostle Paul, "lieth in wickedness"—(original, "*lieth* in *the wicked one*")—like an oarless, sailless vessel in the eddying current, which sweeps it onward and afar. Man, indeed, has noble traits, and many longings after the good and true, but he cannot reach it. His disappointment, in this respect, is proverbial. Poets, orators, philosophers, as well as theologians, all allow it. He is not as bad as he might be; but he has left God, and whither and how far he may wander, who can tell? Most clear it is, that he is "without God and without hope in the world;" and what final doom of despair or destruction that involves, all can imagine. In the first place, he is guilty, and therefore condemned; secondly, he is disordered and wayward, and therefore helpless. The Bible describes him as "dead in trespasses and sins"—far from God, and "nigh unto perishing."

What, then, is demanded for the salvation of man? Obviously two things; first, a pardon, full and free; secondly, regeneration, vital and permanent; in other words, a restoration of his soul to the lost image of God. But how can man secure all this? Can you bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Can the helpless, death-struck spirit, rise

from the abyss, and unite itself to God? No: God himself must interpose. The Divinity must cross the mighty chasm, and unite himself with man; and by such union, bring him back to holiness and heaven. Man is condemned. God, then, must forgive him, by a free act of sovereign clemency. Man is apostate. God must restore him by a new moral power. Man is dead. God must give him life. But how can God accomplish this, except by communicating himself, as the *Life* of the universe, to the poor, suffering, dying race of man? If a sacrifice is to be made to justice, he must make it. If an incarnation is indispensable, in order to such a sacrifice, he must "manifest himself in the flesh"—descending to the depths of human wretchedness, he must himself achieve the work of our redemption. The law, glorious and perfect as it is, cannot do this; for it is "weak through the flesh." No man or angel can do it; for every man is a sinner, and each angel depends upon God for his life, and has none to communicate. The case is peculiar, and demands an interference and a process on the part of God, the most peculiar and amazing. In a word, he must provide an *atonement*—accomplish a reconciliation —meet at once the claims of justice and of mercy—forgive the sinner, and, in that very act, secure his transformation. Both of these, the justice and the mercy, the pardon and the grace, are found in God himself. He only can satisfy justice and mercy—He only can satisfy himself. Whatever is necessary to this issue, he must do, and do alone. "Herein is love!" God became incarnate. God made the reconciliation. Self-moved, self-sustained, he achieved a

work, by which he can be just, and yet justify the ungodly. He gave his Son, which is the same thing as to say, that he gave himself to be "the *propitiation* for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." Thus he takes us to his bosom—thus he pardons us, fully, freely and forever. "We love him, because he first loved us." "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ"—God being the primal source, Jesus Christ, incarnate love and purity, the agent—"by whom we have received the atonement."*

Without entering into any critical discussion of the term, we here gain a true and comprehensive view of the atonement. It may be considered as a means or as an end, as a sacrifice or atonement proper, or as the result of that sacrifice which is reconciliation, at-one-ment—as some, with more regard, perhaps, to sound than sense, have expressed it—the state of being *at one*, that is, united and peaceful. By not adverting to this simple but important distinction, inquirers have fallen into great and opposing errors—one class denying the true idea of sacrifice and atonement, and another, while retaining that idea, failing to connect it adequately with its obvious end and aim. The question ought not to be, whether it is a *reconciliation*, but whether it is a reconciliation by means of *sacrifice*. "Without the shedding of blood," says Paul, "there is no remission," consequently no reconciliation. Well, then, did our Saviour

* See the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where this idea is strikingly exhibited.

shed his blood for the remission of sins? Did he die as a sacrifice for human guilt? In a word, did he suffer *for us*, not by force of circumstances, or the compulsion of his enemies, but by his own voluntary choice, and in view of the necessities of the case? For if such an interposition was necessary, the result must be reconciliation, or the re-union of God and man. An atonement being secured, an offer of mercy follows, which, accepted, issues in remission, restoration and eternal life. In which case the word *atonement* (καταλλαγή) might describe either the cause or the effect, the means or the end, or, with still greater propriety, both together. In the Old Testament, all *reconciliations* between God and his people were made by sacrifice, or shedding of blood; so that, in Hebrew phraseology, the term atonement, or reconciliation, ever involves both ideas. If, then, the same use of language occurs in the New Testament, how natural to say, both with reference to the work of Christ and the result of that work, "We joy in our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement."

The whole subject resolves itself into this question, What relation does the sacrifice of Christ hold to the character and government of God? Was it a simple manifestation of the Divine clemency, a formal or merely liturgical expression of his gracious intentions; or was it a real atonement, and, therefore, a necessary condition of reconciliation and remission? Was it, in any sense, a satisfaction to justice, or, if you please, to justice and mercy combined; for the grand problem to be solved, is the union of these two qualities in the salvation of the guilty?

The truth is, there are only two views of the sacrifice of Christ which can be held, with any degree of consistency; the one, that it was an absolute necessity, the other, an incidental expedient. Those who take the former, maintain that it sustained a most important relation to the Divine government, and involved the idea of a proper expiation, or satisfaction in law; that it could not be dispensed with, and thence, that the death of Christ was an absolute prerequisite to the remission of sins. Those who assume the second view, regard it as a simple, but affecting mode of revealing the mercy of God, without any inherent or legal necessity, and without any idea of expiation or satisfaction to justice, having no special relation to the Divine government, nor, in any way, procuring the remission of sins, except by producing contrition and penitence in those who receive it. In the one case, the atonement is regarded as a necessary act, a Divine sacrifice, in which the claims of justice and love are fully met and vindicated, with a view to the salvation of the guilty. In the other, it is a mere dramatic or liturgic exhibition, in which the love and pity of God are revealed, in striking, but not necessary forms. Go behind the scenes, the advocates of this latter view might say; go behind the scenes, and there is nothing. The entire import and necessity of the thing lie in the expression. It is the love of God *written* in characters of blood. The sufferings of Christ are the sufferings only of a man, or at least of a God-inspired, or a God-inhabited man. Of mystery and sacrifice, in their ordinary sense, there is here absolutely nothing. Justice has nothing to

do with it; nor mercy, except in the expression. The whole is nothing more than a magnificent and affecting show.

We hold, however, that the death of Christ had a special and most extraordinary character, that it was a death for sin, a death for atonement, a sacrifice, infinite and amazing, a mystery, the most transcendant and affecting, of which the shame, anguish, and blood, were but the outward symbols and expressions. The incarnation of Christ was a wonderful and overwhelming fact, but how much more his agony in the garden and on the cross!

> "The Son of God in tears,
> Angels with wonder see."

But the cross, the cross, all purple with his blood, this "passeth understanding!" As a cause, then, or a means to an end, the atonement is a Divine expiation. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, voluntarily places himself under the action of human laws. He becomes one of us, puts himself at the head of the race, and assumes our interests. As "the second Adam," "the Lord from Heaven," he consents to act as our Mediator and representative, and in this capacity, achieves the great work of our redemption. In order to this, he takes part in our shame and degradation, suffering death itself as the necessary result. Though guiltless himself, he suffers under the conditions of human guilt. Assuming our nature, and standing by our side, he permits to come upon him, in their most appalling forms, those terrible evils which are the necessary consequence, not of

his, but of our sins. He who knew no sin, is thus made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God.

But, secondly, the atonement may be viewed as an end or a result, as a subjective, as well as an objective reality.

Out of us, it is the *sacrifice* of Christ, by means of suffering and death. But in us, and as a result of this great fact, it is *reconciliation* with God. Received or realized by a penitent, it forms the means of his re-union with God, or, as it is sometimes expressed, *at-one-ment* between God and man. "Justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Out of us, as an object of faith, we have Christ crucified, or the great doctrine of atonement and sacrifice; in us, we have Christ the hope of glory, that is, righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

In this way, we are saved by "the Christ without us," and by the "Christ within us." The atonement is objective and subjective; objective as a sacrifice for sin, subjective as a means of restoration to the Divine image; objective as a fact or a truth, subjective as a principle or a life.

In correspondence with this distinction, two things are accomplished for man by the mediation and atonement of Christ. In the first place, all the legal obstructions which prevented the exercise of the Divine clemency towards the guilty and fallen, are forever removed. "Mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other"—all unite and blend in this Divine method. The "day of vengeance from our God," is yet "the acceptable year of the Lord." The justice is clemency, the clemency is jus-

tice. The claims of the Divine government are fully met, the law is "magnified and made honorable," as the old divines express it, and by that very means, mercy is extended to the "vilest of the vile." "To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are passed, through the forbearance (clemency) of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus."*

This we denominate a sacrifice for sin; an expiation, in the proper sense of the term, the essence of which is, the just suffering for the unjust. Such a sacrifice was demanded at once by justice and love, that is, by the very nature of God. It is of the essence both of righteousness and grace. Hence its endurance cannot be regarded, properly speaking, as a positive infliction, or as an actual punishment; but simply as an expiation, through voluntary suffering, by which justice is vindicated, while mercy is secured. It satisfies at once the claims of law and of grace. Neither the one nor the other can demand more. It is what God himself demands from himself, in extending salvation to the guilty. He cannot act capriciously and illegally—without a reason, and without an end. He is himself law, and must enthrone justice even in the administration of mercy. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, (sin offering) condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law

* Rom. iii. 25, 26.

might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."*

How evident from this, that the sufferings of Christ were vicarious or substitutionary. Not that Christ actually suffered, as some affirm, what all the redeemed, but for him, would have suffered, "pang for pang, spasm for spasm," to "all eternity"; not that his sufferings are a literal, mechanical or commercial equivalent for ours, as others believe, but that they are a substitute for such,—a moral equivalent, an equivalent in law and justice, which makes our pardon and salvation consistent with the highest claims of righteousness. In this sense, "he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." Our guilt, indeed, was not literally transferred to him. Guilt is personal, is of the essence of sin, is inseparable from a vicious state or a vicious act, and therefore is not, strictly speaking, transferable. But the consequences of guilt are transferable. The innocent may suffer for the guilty, suffer that which the guilty alone ought to bear, but from which the latter is delivered by such gracious interposition. The innocent, in such a case, comes in between the guilty, and his deserved punishment. Whatever, then, the innocent may suffer with such an end in view, is a substitution for the punishment of the guilty. It may not itself be punishment; for an innocent man cannot, properly speaking, be punished. He may suffer as

* Romans, viii. 3.

an evil-doer, but he is not an evil-doer; and his sufferings on account of sin, however intense and overwhelming, are not absolute punishment. He cannot feel them as such—he is innocent, and suffers with the consciousness not of a guilty, but of a guiltless man. There is an immense difference between suffering for ourselves and suffering for others. The one, may be a punishment justly merited; the other may be an atonement, voluntarily chosen, and patiently endured. By connecting himself with an evil-doer, assuming his interests and destiny, with a view to his rescue and reform, a good man may subject himself to painful trials, which but for him, would come upon the evil-doer alone, and which the latter justly deserves. But the good man is upheld by conscious rectitude, and for the joy set before him, endures the cross and despises the shame.

In the same way Christ suffers for us. For his sake, we are forgiven and saved. His death upon the cross has averted our death in hell. Justice is satisfied that we should be "saved from wrath through him." Had he not suffered, we must have perished. Becoming man, and assuming our position as a condemned race, he endured what we alone ought to endure, pain, anguish and death, as the necessary results of sin. His sufferings, therefore, are in the stead of ours. They bring us pardon and everlasting life. "When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

The sufferings of Christ, then, were not in all respects the same as ours would have been, had he not interfered on our behalf; for the innocent cannot suffer, in every particu-

lar, as those must who are personally guilty. But as far as an innocent being can suffer for the guilty, Christ suffered for us. His agonies were immense and overwhelming; so that in the end, the transference or exchange of suffering comes to the same thing as the transference or exchange of guilt.* Even if there be some difference in the kind of endurance, the one stands in the stead of the other. Christ did not sin for us; he suffered for our sins.

Here we discover the relation of the sufferings of Christ to the love of God. "For a righteous man will one die, peradventure for a good man, some would even dare to die; but God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The necessity for the sufferings of Christ grows out not only of the justice of God, and his consequent abhorrence of sin, but of his love and compassion for the sinner. But he could not confer grace in an absolute way; this were to defeat its purpose. He must confer it in harmony with law. The administration of justice must have its legitimate course. Sin must be punished. Hence, if grace cannot be conferred without a sacrifice, that sacrifice must be provided, in connection with grace. Indeed, it must form a part of grace; so that the atonement is an act at once of judgment and of mercy. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life."

* It is in this sense that guilt may be said to be imputed, though not transferred. Charged to Christ by his voluntary adoption of our interests, as a condemned race, he suffered its consequences, but suffered them as a being perfectly innocent.

What an interesting light this sheds upon the perfection of the Divine administration, the harmony of the Divine attributes! "God is love." Hence, he is immutably gracious and merciful, "slow to anger, abundant in goodness, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin." His mercy, therefore, is not purchased, as some hyper-orthodox teachers affirm, by the atonement of Christ. For, how could that be purchased by the atonement, which provided the atonement, and through that stupendous sacrifice, goes forth to redeem a guilty race? The atonement purchased *us;* but mercy gave the price. In this act, God and Christ are one. But God even in his mercy must be just. His love is a holy love, and ever supports the right. But his mercy is unbought and everlasting. Nay, it is his very nature, and not only prompted, but completed the whole work of our redemption. It embodied itself in the life and death of Christ. Herein is love! Herein is God!

Not only are all legal obstructions thus removed to the salvation of man, but, secondly, a sufficient moral power is brought to bear upon the soul, to effect its renovation. As we have said, God is here, brought home to the heart by a new and peculiar manifestation, which none who receive it can resist. This convinces us of sin. This quells our pride. This humbles and exalts us. This inspires us at once with penitence and gratitude, with adoration and joy. "The love of Christ *constraineth* us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, that we who live should not henceforth live unto ourselves but unto him who died and rose again." Beautiful is earth, in the smile

of God—beautiful the face of man, or angel, glowing with the love and purity of the skies. But they grow dim in the presence of the dying Son of God, through whose pale but majestic countenance streams all the glory of uncreated love! I see it—I feel it—through all my soul I feel it; and from that dark chaos within, comes forth a new creation of order and beauty; while the morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy.

This, then, is the doctrine of the atonement as held by the universal church, reconciliation between God and man, restoration and reunion, by virtue of the expiatory sacrifice, or substitutionary sufferings of Jesus Christ. Not reconciliation, simply, or the reunion of two parties at variance, by the reparation or the reformation of the offender, but reconciliation through a proper expiation. The eyes of a guilty sinner are, therefore, first of all, directed to Jesus Christ, who is "raised up a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and the remission of sins." The *blood*, the *death* of Christ, "cleanseth from all sin." Atonement or expiation first, then remission, penitence and hope, transformation and eternal joy.

This view of the atonement, which we deem fundamental, has been denied by the Unitarians and others, who hold that we are reconciled to God, not by means of a substitutionary sacrifice on the part of Christ, but by the moral influence of his character and teachings over our hearts and lives. On this ground they maintain that we are forgiven, not in consideration of what Christ has done, but in consideration of our own penitence and reformation; that

the law demanded no satisfaction, and that none was given in the death of Christ, and thence that atonement consists in our returning to God, with penitent and believing hearts! This they say is produced by the life and teachings of Jesus, whose death was not an expiation, or sacrifice to justice, but an attestation to the truth, an example of endurance and self-denial, or, at best, a demonstration of the Divine purity and love. Others, again, admit that the sufferings of Christ are vicarious and substitutionary, but only in appearance and form; that the atonement is a manifestation of the Divine love issuing in the transformation of the sinner, but not, as we contend, a sacrifice for sin.* They find, indeed, a sacrificial or expiatory character in the mere outward form, or what has been called the *liturgical* aspect of the doctrine: but what is this, when separated from its reality or essence? The atonement is either an *expiation* or *not.* If an expiation or a sacrifice for sin, it is such in its very nature and essence, not simply in its outward form or figurative representation. The form or liturgy, that is, the ritual and outward representation of a doctrine, to be good for anything, must correspond with its inward spirit. Otherwise the form deceives us! If the atonement or expiation is only in the words, or in the ritual, figurative aspect of the doctrine, not in the doctrine itself, it is *nothing*—at least nothing tangible. The whole thing is a play upon words, and leaves the matter precisely where it was. The true idea of a sacrifice for sin, of vica-

* This is the view of Schleiermacher and some of the German theologians. It is also the view of Coleridge and his followers

rious atonement by the death of Christ, is denied; and we are compelled to place this view in the same category with that of the Unitarian divines, who deny in every sense the doctrine of a true expiation or atonement for sin, and the propriety of relying upon the sufferings or merits of Christ, as a ground of justification before God.*

As an exposition of this view, let us quote a few passages from Dr. Gannet's Tract on the Atonement, published by the Unitarian Association. "Reconciliation," says he, p. 1, "is the heart of the doctrine. Its whole vitality, meaning and value reside here." "Upon the sinner's return to God," p. 5, "God ceases to impute his sins unto him, or to consider him any longer as a guilty person. * * * And since he is led to this change of habits, inward and outward, by the *instructions* of Christ, expressed both by his

* This, perhaps, is a little too strongly stated. It applies, indeed, to the great majority of Unitarian teachers; but there are exceptions to the rule. Dr. Channing, and a few others, never fully abandoned some of the higher elements of orthodox belief, and held to a view of the death of Christ, in one feature, at least, akin to that which makes it an *atonement* or expiation proper. "Many of us," says he, Works, 4th Ed. p. 318, "are dissatisfied with this explanation," namely, that 'the mediation of Christ procures forgiveness by leading to that repentance and virtue, which is the great and only condition upon which forgiveness is bestowed,' "and think that the Scriptures ascribe the remission of sins to Christ's death, with an emphasis so peculiar, that we ought to consider this event as having *a special influence*, in removing *punishment*, though the Scriptures may not reveal the way in which it contributes to this end." This is a most important admission; but fatal to the Unitarian view of the atonement, as generally held. For we have, in the work of Christ, a *real* mediation or *none*. If Jesus did not make a proper expiation for sin, he was nothing more than a teacher, a revealer, or at best a manifestation of the Divine character. If his death was not a real *propitiation for sin*, it was a simple attestation to the truth. In which case we are saved, not by faith, but by works, not by the sacrifice of the Son of God, but by the penitence and purity of our own hearts; and Mr. Parker, Mr. Emerson and others, who have renounced the Unitarian theolgy as shallow and powerless, are justified in rejecting the very idea of *mediation*, and representing man as his own Saviour, and redemption as the result of his own individual action. In this view, what are we to think, not of a real, but of a *liturgical atonement?*

words and his life—in what he said, did and was, through the various course of his ministry, from the baptism of the Jordan, by which he was introduced to the mediatorial work, to the baptism of the cross, by which he was introduced to the glory of its accomplishment—therefore the sinner is justified, sanctified and saved through Jesus Christ —through him man receives the atonement, and the world is reconciled to God." He goes on to say that this is not the current doctrine of the church, and that repentance is all that is necessary to the Divine favor, and consequently that the death of Christ becomes available for our redemption, simply from the moral influence which it exerts over us. He insists strongly that it had no effect whatever upon God or his government; but that its effect terminates upon us, in reconciling us to God, by producing our repentance and reformation; and adds, p. 10, "I consider the popular doctrine of the atonement, under whatever modification it may be held, as false and injurious."* His position, therefore, is that the *death* or *atonement* of Christ, in itself, has no efficacy to procure the pardon of the guilty, and that the only efficacy in the case is to be ascribed to penitence and reformation; so that it is only in a general and figurative, perhaps liturgical sense, that we are said to be saved by the blood of Christ. Literally and properly, we are saved by penitence and reformation, the result of the death and

* Properly speaking, the death of Christ did not *reconcile* God to us. But it justified him, on the fundamental principles of righteousness, in reconciling us to himself. It entered into the very essence of his government, and proved him *just* while justifying the *ungodly*.

teachings of Christ, in their influence upon our moral nature. On this theory all ideas of expiation, atonement, sacrifice and substitutionary suffering, taken in their ordinary sense, are *false* and *pernicious*. Jesus is not a *priest*—he offers no sacrifice, makes no expiation, except by a figure or a form of speech! We are forgiven and accepted for Christ's sake, or in the name of Christ, not because Christ has died and satisfied the claims of justice as well as love on the behalf of the penitent, but because we ourselves, enlightened by his teaching and example, repent and reform. "*Repentance*," he says, p. 14, "secures the Divine favor by a *necessary* action. Repentance cancels the past, satisfies justice, saves the sinner." "The supposition that the death of Christ was *necessary*," (in government and law,) "to procure the pardon of the guilty, is therefore gratuitous, and founded upon a misapprehension of the nature of forgiveness." It follows from this, that if repentance occur from any other cause than the death of Christ, or without the slightest reference to that event, it will secure pardon and everlasting life; whence we may be justified, not by "faith in Christ," but by "the deeds of the law." "The doctrine," says he, p. 19, "which ascribes to the death of Christ an efficacy, whether vicarious, meritorious or mysterious, in procuring the pardon of the penitent, is irrational." All such notions, according to the author, "dissolve at the touch of reason." "It is a false interpretation," says he, "which sees, in the language of the New Testament concerning the death of Christ, an assertion of any other than a moral influence issuing from the cross." (p. 23.) Hence, (p. 28,)

he condemns and repudiates "the conduct of the conscience-stricken sinner, who," under the influence of the popular views of the atonement, "makes Christ his refuge, as if," he adds, "the mercy of God were not large enough to overshadow him. The dying believer leans on *the merits* of Christ, as he has been taught to style services which are sadly misrepresented by such a term, and when pointed to the mercy of God, feebly reiterates that he trusts in his Saviour." "To me," says Dr. Gannet, with startling consistency, "language of this kind is indescribably painful. It robs the death-bed of the sincere Christian of half the influence which I wish it to exert over me."

The writer of this tract on the atonement is an amiable and learned man, the successor of the eloquent and gifted Channing; but we are compelled, in opposition to its entire spirit and purport, to say, that we have not "so learned Christ." It seems, as Robert Hall pointedly remarks, with reference to similar views, "not so much to mistake as to contradict the Word of God." There can be but little question, we think, as Channing himself is compelled to allow, that the Scriptures ascribe to the death of Christ a *special efficacy* in procuring the pardon of the guilty; that Christ died *for us*, as one would die in the stead of a dear friend whom he wished to save; that the death of Christ is a proper sacrifice for sin; and although repentance and reformation are necessary to the enjoyment of the Divine favor, and the restoration of the soul to his image, yet we are forgiven, not for our penitence and good works, but for Christ's sake. On which ground we affirm that it is scrip-

tural and proper to trust in Christ—to make him the rest and refuge of our soul—to plead his *merits*, which are the expression of the Divine mercy, and the medium of the Divine forgiveness; "for we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." To us, Christ and God are one, and he that commits his spirit to Christ, commits it, by that very act, to God; and hence it is a glorious thing, in the hour of death, to reiterate, not feebly but triumphantly, that we "trust in our Saviour."

> "Jesus can make a dying bed
> Feel soft as downy pillows are,
> While on his breast I lean my head,
> And breathe my life out sweetly there."

Nay, more; we feel that it will be yet more glorious and delightful, amid the splendors of heaven, to unite with those "who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," in ascriptions of praise and adoration to "Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever!"

Those who deny the vicarious or substitutionary nature of the atonement, it appears to us, utterly misconceive its nature and design, and find difficulties where there are none. Why should it be thought an incredible or an unreasonable thing, that the *innocent* should suffer for the *guilty*, with a view to their salvation? If this cannot be established as a general rule; if it cannot be vindicated, in all cases, under human governments and laws, why object to it in a case so special and extraordinary as the one under

consideration? Why, especially, object to it, if God himself, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the Saviour and the saved, enter into it, as the *one method* which sustains the majesty of justice, and the tenderness of love? It is a special and extraordinary interposition. There is nothing in the universe like it. It stands alone, a solitary monument of the wisdom and goodness of the Almighty, a method of pardon and salvation which He approves, which is the expression at once of his justice and his grace, which meets all the exigencies of the case, sustains the Divine government, and restores the sinner to purity and heaven.

All errors upon this subject arise from separating the being and work of Christ from the being and work of God, as if they had diverse interests and diverse designs in the matter of human redemption. Let them be united, and all is plain. The sacrifice of Christ is, then, the sacrifice of God, and is made only to justice and love, which are thus enthroned over all the powers and influences of the universe. Then, to believe in Christ, to trust in Christ, or in his merits or his righteousness, is to trust in God, and in God alone.

On this ground the efficacy of the atonement is ascribed to the infinite worth and dignity of our Saviour's person, and in connection with this, to the fact that by his incarnation he became our representative, by taking to himself, not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. "His assumption of human nature," says Robert Hall, in his sermon on 'The Substitution of the Innocent for the Guilty,' "made his oblation of himself *possible;* his possession of the Di-

vine rendered it efficient; and thus weakness and power, the imperfections incident to a frail and mortal creature, and the exemption from these, the attributes of time and of eternity, the elements of being most opposite, and deduced from opposite worlds, equally combined to give efficacy to his character as the Redeemer, and validity to his sacrifice."

Here let it be especially remarked, that on the principles we have laid down, the atonement could make no change in the attributes and government of God; none in his sentiments and feelings towards man; for he was ever the God of purity and love, and the atonement was the provision and expression of that love. Whatever is in the effect, is also in the cause; and all, therefore, which was accomplished by that atonement, existed, as a thought or a sentiment, a quality or an attribute, in the heart of God. It could not, therefore, change his character or his dispositions towards men; it merely changed his relations, or the relations of his government to the guilty, by making it right and becoming in God, as a moral governor, to propose terms of reconciliation, and receive the penitent to the bosom of his love. To whom, then, or to what was the atonement made? To God himself, or rather to *justice* and *love*. These demanded the sacrifice; and to magnify these, to give them scope and lustre in the salvation of the world, the eternal Father himself made the sacrifice. It was a work of *principle*—a work of *righteousness* and *love*—the most stupendous and thrilling that ever has been made, or ever can be made. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son; sparing him not, but giving him up

to the death for us all; that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life!

This view saves us from the objections of those who represent a vicarious atonement as injurious to the character of God, making it, so to speak, less amiable than that of Christ, and consequently attracting men rather to Christ than to God. Occasionally, indeed, orthodox writers and preachers have done the cause of truth a serious injury, by inconsiderate and declamatory appeals, in which, with singular inconsistency, they have represented God the Father as demanding justice without mercy; and the thunders of his vengeance hurled against a guilty race, as intercepted by Jesus Christ, and quenched in his atoning blood! Like Jupiter on Olympus, his red right arm bared for destruction, God has been described rather as a tyrant and a fiend, than as a Governor and a Father; while Jesus Christ, in his gentleness and self-sacrifice, has been contrasted with the stern severity and furious vengeance of the Almighty, just as if he were not *God manifest* in the flesh, but a being, with a different character and separate interests. God and Christ are one; one in nature, one in aim. The humanity of Christ is but the form or medium of the indwelling Deity. Even when on the cross, it might have been said of him, "This is the true God and eternal Life." The sacrifice was made to *justice*, and not only to *justice*, but to *mercy*, made by the Father, made by the Son, as the outgoing and expression of that everlasting *Love* which is exhaustless as the nature, and unchangeable as the existence of God.

We maintain, therefore, that vicarious or substitutionary suffering, is of the very essence of the atonement, and such suffering, moreover, as to give it infinite worth and efficacy. In numberless forms is this great fact taught in the Holy Scriptures. Indeed, it pervades them, as light pervades the heavens, giving tone and color to the whole. It is the fundamental truth of the remedial system; it is the only one which gives us the true idea of God, of redemption, regeneration and everlasting life. It is taught, for example, in those passages which represent the work of Christ as a *sin-offering*, or as a *propitiation* for sin,—as a death of the *innocent* for the *guilty*, of the *just* for the *unjust*—as a suffering for *sin*, for *remission*, for *reconciliation*, for the *ungodly*, for *sinners*;—in all those which represent Christ as the substance or antitype of the Jewish *priesthood* and *atonements*, as the *One High Priest*, who offers the *one sacrifice* for the remission of the sins of many, who makes an *oblation of himself*, and enters *once for all*, and for the benefit of all, *into the Holy Place, with his own blood*, as the Son of God who *through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God*, as *the Lamb of God* who taketh, (beareth) away the sins of the world—as *our paschal Lamb* sacrificed for us; in all those passages, which represent his *blood*, as *cleansing* from sin, as *shed* for *remission* of sin, as *washing away sin*; all those which describe him as *made sin*, made a *curse for us*, as *giving himself* for us, giving *his life a ransom* for many, as *wounded* for our *transgressions*, bruised for our iniquities, suffering the *chastisement of our peace*, and working out an everlasting *righteousness* which might be *unto all* and

upon all them that believe; in a word, as *sinless*, yet suffering like a *sinner*, voluntarily *bearing our sins in his own body on the tree*, and thus offering to justice an adequate expiation for the guilt of the world.*

The whole system of the Jewish ritual was formed on the principle of sacrifice and atonement. All the shedding of blood, without which there could be no remission, foreshadowed the substitution and sacrifice of Christ, and derived its significance and moral influence from this fact. Sin, confessed and abjured by the congregation, was *put upon the head* of the victim, as on the great day of atonement, signifying the pardon of sin, by the sacrifice of another, slain in the sinner's stead. If this was not its signification and design, it was the merest superstition, a superstition utterly unworthy of a Divine appointment and sanction. But these ritual observances, and especially these sacrifices of atonement, St. Paul informs us, were shadows of good things to come. The *body*, he tells us, was *Christ*. His death and atonement cast these shadows, gave them import and value. In him they had their fulfillment and explanation. Upon this subject the Apostle reasons very strikingly in his Epistle to the Hebrews. For as the ancient High-Priest entered into the Holy of Holies, once a year, with the sacrifice of atonement, so Christ entered with his own blood into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. "For Christ,"

* See Romans, v. 6—8. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. Heb. ii. 9. 1 Thess. v. 10. Ephes. v. 2. 1 John, x. 15. Gal. i. 3, 4. 1 Peter, iii. 18. Rom. vi. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 3. Matt. xxvi. 28. Ephes. i. 7. Heb. i. 3. 1 John, i. 7. Isaiah, liii. 3, 6. Gal. iii. 13. Heb. vii. 26, 27. Heb. ix. 15. Rev. iv. 8, 9; v. 13, 14.

says he, Heb. ix. 24, "is not entered into the Holy Places, made with hands which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the High-Priest entereth into the Holy Place, every year with the blood of others:—but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time without sin (a sin offering) unto salvation."

All this, says the objector, is mere metaphor, eastern hyperbole and figure of speech, or perhaps ritual exhibition and liturgical form. If so, what a singular confusion in the language of the Scriptures, and in the minds of its writers. Here is, first, the typical or figurative, or, if you please, liturgical language of the Old Testament; here, also, is the typical or figurative atonement of the Jewish ritual. And "the body of it," the substance, the reality, which is Christ, is figurative or symbolic too! First, the shadows of the Old Testament, and secondly, the shadows of the New, all shadows, mere figures and metaphors, or at the best, liturgic forms and symbols. A figurative priest—a figurative sacrifice—a figurative atonement—a metaphoric or liturgical redemption. So that the death of Christ, mysterious, awful, thrilling as it is, is no sacrifice after all, and atonement has yet to be made for sin, by our penitence and good works! According to this view, the blood of atonement, shed for the remission of the sins of many, is but an interesting and striking fact, well fitted to make upon us a deep moral impression, but avails nothing to satisfy justice

on our behalf, or procure for us the pardon of our guilt, the salvation of our souls!

But, no! we will not accept this sophistry for reasoning; this evasion for proof. The body, the reality is Christ, not the figure or the shadow, the liturgic form, or ritual symbol, but the thing itself. So that while the priesthood and sacrifices of the old Dispensation were temporary shadows, beautiful but perishable symbols and adumbrations of good things to come, the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ are sublime and permanent realities, to us the most glorious and blissful of all realities; for "we are washed, we are sanctified, we are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." From this source we derive pardon and peace; and not only so, but holiness and eternal life. This is our only hope. Here will we rest forever. Therefore, with angels in glory, and the spirits of just men made perfect, we unite in adoring "Him that hath loved us and washed from our sins in his own blood."

If any one raise the objection here, that Jesus Christ as God is impassive, and can never himself atone for sin, by means of suffering and sacrifice, we beg to tell him that the word *impassive*, in this connection, conveys a false or inadequate conception; besides no one has a right to measure the capacities of the Godhead, especially as incarnate, and not only so, but that this is a practical denial of the plain teaching of the Scripture, which first represents Jesus Christ as Divine, and then speaks of him, not as a divided, but as a single personality, bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, and thus offering a rich and immaculate

oblation for the ransom of the world, "who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God." If you say the subject involves a mystery, on any supposition which can be made respecting it, be it so; for this is all we claim. Wonder, transcendent, boundless, is our most appropriate feeling before the agony of the garden and of the tree.

But, replies the unsatisfied caviller, if Jesus Christ as divine, suffered for sin, then God punished himself, which surely is an absurdity not to be received in the nineteenth century. To this we reply that the sufferings of Christ were not a punishment, but an expiation; not the natural and necessary consequence of personal corruption and guilt, but a voluntary sacrifice for the salvation of the world. But allowing your irreverent expression to have some justification in fact, let me ask, does the father punish himself when he voluntarily assumes the debt of his erring child, the payment of which strips him of all he has, and reduces him to want? Does the friend punish himself when he consents to die for his friend? Does the patriot punish himself, when he plunges, like an ancient king, into the abyss, to save his suffering country? What if God had spared his own Son,—his other self, and not given him up to the death for us all? What if he had refused this infinite sacrifice for our redemption, as much the sacrifice of the Father as the sacrifice of the Son? "For a righteous man will one die? Peradventure for a good man, some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ

died for us." Hence, he made, if you will have it so, the nearest possible approach to self-punishment; for it was self-sacrifice, the deepest, the most amazing that men or angels have ever known. "How hast thou loved us, good Father, who sparedst not thine only Son, but deliveredst him up for us ungodly! How hast thou loved us, for whom he that thought it no robbery to be equal with thee, was made subject to the death of the cross! He alone free among the dead, having power to lay down his life, and power to take it again? for as to thee, both Victor and Victim, and therefore Victor because the Victim? for as to thee, Priest and Sacrifice, and therefore Priest because the Sacrifice? making us to thee, of servants, sons, by being born of thee, and serving us."*

But Christ is a Mediator. His sufferings are intended at once to satisfy justice and grace. In dignity and magnitude, therefore, they must bear some relation to this end. To say the least, they must be such as to "magnify the law," and enthrone it, as immutable and divine, in the heart of men and angels. Such a work demanded a special atonement, a rich and immaculate sacrifice. This, no mere man or angel could supply. The sufferings of such an one could have no conceivable relation to the government of God, in the way of reparation or atonement. They might be affecting enough, like the death of Socrates, or of Paul; but could contribute nothing to the vindication of violated law, or the salvation of a lost soul. To achieve this,

*Confessiones Augustini, Lib. x. c. 43.

a higher victim, a more glorious death, was necessary. Whence we conclude that Jesus delivered up "Himself," not his body merely, not his human nature merely, but Himself—a Sacrifice for the sins of the world! It was the fact of our Lord's Divinity, which made his atonement complete. This met the case. This satisfied eternal justice, as well as eternal love; so that "we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of his grace." "We love Him because he first loved us."

This, like the Trinity or the Incarnation, is a great mystery; but how deeply, how powerfully does it affect the heart. What grace is here! What justice! What amazing pity and love! How the poor sin-stricken heart trembles under its influence! How it exults in the thought that such a ransom has been paid for its redemption. In the light of such an event, how vile, how horrible is sin; how beautiful, how attractive is holiness! How fearful the second death! How entrancing and ineffable the second, the everlasting life!

Suffering for the benefit of the lost and the miserable, has introduced into the universe a new kind of experience. It has given rise to a new order of feelings, feelings the highest and holiest that can be conceived, whether they thrill the heart of man, of angel or of God. The "great salvation" has enhanced the blessedness of "the glorified," on high. It has multiplied a thousand fold, the felicity of all pure intelligences. It is the source of infinite satisfaction to God himself. Within its depths are enfolded "the mani-

fold wisdom of God," into which "the angels desire to look;" and through all eternity will it constitute a source of admiration, love and joy to the whole universe of sanctified mind. Indeed, this fact, suffering for the benefit of the lost, is the very mystery of redemption, "the mystery of the Father of Christ and of God," in which are "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," the one glorious thing which forms the wonder of angels, and the song of the redeemed. It begins a new era, not only on earth, but in heaven; a new joy, not only in man, but in God, a joy foreseen, indeed, from all eternity, but realized only at the death of Christ; a joy deep as the heart of infinite love, and measureless as the ages of eternity. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but when He shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

Before we close this part of our subject, we must be permitted a word upon a point not yet touched—but one which probably has often been in the mind of the intelligent reader. It will be observed that thus far, we have endeavored to establish a fact, without discussing the mode of it. We have affirmed the proposition that Christ suffered in his whole nature, but we have not ventured to affirm in a dogmatic way, what it was, or how it was he suffered. The external aspects of his suffering—the marred visage—the failing eye—the flowing blood—the contorted limbs—the agonizing cry—the drooping head—and

the ghastly paleness of death, are obvious to all. But these, it seems to us, are merely images and expressions of deeper sufferings within. "His soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death." "His soul was made an offering for sin." What, then, was his agony? How, especially, did his pure and infinite spirit endure such suffering? To this, we frankly reply, we cannot tell. The subject transcends our reasoning. We cannot speculate upon it. Better far kneel down in Gethsemane, with the suppliant sufferer, or, placing ourselves, in humble contrition, beneath his cross, exclaim with St. Thomas, "my Lord, and my God!"*

Here, then, we may enumerate the following points as settled: firstly, that man is a sinner, justly condemned by eternal justice, and exposed to everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; secondly, that God, "out of his mere mercy," became incarnate, in the person of Jesus Christ, who is thus "God, manifest in the flesh," that, in the same nature which had sinned, and under the law which was violated, he might achieve the redemption of the lost; thirdly, that in pursuance of this end, he made an atonement for sin, by the sacrifice of himself, whereby justice was satisfied, and the way opened for the pardon, and restoration, of the guilty; fourthly, that God not merely manifested his justice, in this extraordinary interposition, which transcends, as a mystery, all thought and

* "If the Scripture," says Bishop Butler, with admirable wisdom, "has, as surely it has, left this matter of the satisfaction of Christ somewhat mysterious, left somewhat in it unrevealed, all conjectures about it must be, if not evidently absurd, yet at least uncertain. Nor has any one reason to complain for want of farther information, unless he can show his claim to it."—Works, Eng. ed. p. 179.

expression, but gave scope and lustre to that eternal principle of his government, in the salvation of the fallen, and thus established and perpetuated righteousness as well as grace, not as an expedient to be modified and allowed, but as a law to be venerated and loved: fifthly, that thus Jesus Christ was a true substitute for the guilty, and that those who believe, owe to him their entire salvation, from its first conception in the bosom of God, to its final consummation in eternal glory; on which ground, our sins were laid upon him, or as some express it, *imputed* to him, not indeed as transferred to his personal character, but as expiated by his voluntary sufferings and death, and which, as they result in our redemption, and are appropriated by faith alone, are made over for the benefit of all who believe; or as the old divines express it, are "imputed to us for righteousness."

So that, sixthly, we are justified, that is, forgiven and accepted, brought into new and endearing relations to God as his children, "freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," and thus ascribe all the glory of our redemption to the "free and sovereign grace of a covenant keeping God." Finally, it is thus receiving Christ, as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," in other words, making him our own by faith, relying upon his merits, and clinging to his cross, that we are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.

In a word, summing up the whole, we believe that the

sufferings and death of the Son of God are a real expiation for the sins of the world, which, received by a truly penitent soul, unites him to Christ, lifts him up into the bosom of God, transforms him into the divine image, makes him a partaker of eternal glory.

CONCLUSION.

What think ye of Christ? What of his glory—what of his work? He died to unite us to God. Are we united to God? Are we partakers of the Divine nature? Is our life hid with Christ, in God? Are we "rooted and grounded in love?" Comprehending with all saints "what is the heighth and the depth, the length and the breadth, and knowing the love of God, which passeth knowledge," are we "filled with all the fullness of God?" Is Christ formed "in us the hope of glory;" and under this influence, is our life becoming radiant and beautiful? As we have borne "the image of the earthy," do we now bear, do we hope yet more fully to bear, "the image of the heavenly?" In a word, are we washed, are we justified, are we sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God, and thus pure, peaceful, active, loving, hopeful, full of good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy? If so, let us rejoice yet more and more in the God of our salvation; and let our whole life be a closer and yet closer imitation of Christ. Let us ever drink at this fountain, and then go forth into the world to bless it with our fruitfulness and joy! In our whole deportment let us express the holy, sweet, and purifying influence of a life hid with Christ in God; and, if possible, repay to the Saviour of sinners,

even if in the most imperfect degree, something of his love and pity for us. "He that gives alms to the poor, takes Jesus by the hand; he that patiently endures injuries and affronts, helps him to bear his cross; he that comforts his brother in affliction, gives an amiable kiss of peace to Jesus; he that bathes his own and his neighbor's sins in tears of penitence and compassion, washes his Master's feet; we lead Jesus into the recesses of our heart by holy meditations, and we enter into his heart when we express him in our actions; for so the Apostle says, 'He that is in Christ, walks as he also walked.'"*

Thus let us be "followers of God, as dear children"—walk in "the light as he is in the light"—live in Christ, and die in Christ, and finally reign with him forever. With this view, let us join in the following prayer.

"O eternal, holy, and most glorious Jesu, who hast united two natures of distance infinite, descending to the lowness of human nature, that thou mightest exalt human nature to a participation of the Divinity; we, thy people that sat in darkness and in the shadows of death, have seen great light to entertain our understandings, and enlighten our souls with its excellent influences; for the excellence of thy sanctity shining gloriously in every part of thy life, is like thy angel, the pillar of fire, which called thy children from the darkness of Egypt. Lord, open mine eyes, and give me power to behold thy righteous glories; and let my soul be so entertained with affections

* Jeremy Taylor, Works, Vol. 2, p. 71.

and holy ardors, that I may never look back upon the flames of Sodom, but may follow thy light, which recreates and enlightens, and guides us to the mountains of safety, and sanctuaries of holiness. Holy Jesu, since thy image is imprinted on our nature by creation, let me also express thy image by all the parts of a holy life, conforming my will and affections to thy holy precepts; submitting my understanding to thy dictates, and lessons of perfection; imitating thy sweetnesses and excellencies of society, thy devotion in prayer, thy conformity to God, thy zeal tempered with meekness, thy patience heightened with charity; that heart and hands and eyes, and all my faculties, may grow up with the increase of God, till I come to the full measure of the stature of Christ, even to be a perfect man in Christ Jesus; that at last, in thy light, I may see light, and reap the fruits of glory from the seeds of sanctity in the imitation of thy holy life, O blessed and holy Saviour Jesus! Amen."*

* Prayer prefixed to "the Life of Christ," by Jeremy Taylor.—Works, Vol. II, p. 72.

SUPPLEMENT.

REVIEW OF DR. BUSHNELL'S THEORIES OF THE INCARNATION AND ATONEMENT.

In order to complete our view of the Incarnation and Atonement, it seems necessary to take some notice of the theories of Dr. Bushnell, whose work, entitled "God in Christ," has made its appearance since the publication of the first edition of this volume. Perhaps he himself would object to the word theories, as applied to his views; but we know not how else to characterize them. He has certainly presented his opinions upon these subjects, in a form as strikingly theoretical, or speculative, as any that ever fell under our observation. Nevertheless, his book is filled with earnest protests against all dogma and theory in the matter of religion; and, if one might believe the author, is intended to bring men back to the simplicity of a reverent and confiding faith. That this is the sincere aim of Dr. B. we have no serious doubt. All our acquaintance with him goes to satisfy us that he is an honest, earnest man; and his book, however it may seem to others, strengthens this conviction. But his mind is naturally speculative, and even dogmatic; and perhaps no theological work, in modern times, could be named, so fitted to promote a speculative and even disputatious turn of mind.

That this will be its result, time will abundantly prove. While demolishing, and that with no gentle blows, the dogmas of others, he sets up his own in their stead—dogmas as purely theoretical as those of his neighbors. His keen Damascus blade sweeps the whole field of theological controversy, and all for the purpose of putting down polemics! By means of words he throws contempt upon words. He hurls opinions against opinions, dogmas against dogmas; and cuts to pieces reason and logic by the keen edge of intuition and argument. It is just as if a man had entered upon a crusade to put down fighting, by knocking every bully in the head, and then setting himself up as the champion of universal peace!

But we must be permitted, in all honesty, to say, that for ourselves personally, we owe Dr. B. a debt of gratitude for his book. It is no holiday affair. It is a work to be read,—read with the profoundest interest. With all its faults, springing, perhaps, from the very power and exuberance of the author's mind, not, we trust, from the weakness or waywardness of his heart, it contains much that is true, much that is beautiful and good. It will quicken thought. It may assist in clearing away rubbish from the great truths of Christianity. Its very errors may stimulate inquiry, and give occasion for broader, juster, and more scriptural views.

Still, truth compels us to characterize his work as preeminently speculative and fanciful. With the exceptions we have named, this, we think, will be acknowledged its predominant quality. A production of genius and power,

it is too paradoxical and extravagant, in its spirit and style, to secure any thing like a favorable reception among sober theologians or humble Christians. Dr. B., however, ought to have the credit of being even more than orthodox on the subject of our Saviour's Divinity, which he defends with earnestness. He exaggerates what may be termed the Divine aspect of Christ's character, making him, if possible, more Divine than is done by many orthodox teachers, who in assigning different parts in the work of redemption to the two natures of Christ, and especially in separating the Divinity from the humanity in the closing act of the great drama, yield, in Dr. B.'s opinion, the whole argument to the Unitarians. "The Scripture," says he, p. 153, "does not say that a certain human soul called Jesus, born as such of Mary, obeyed and suffered; but it says, in the boldest manner, that he who was in the form of God humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. A declaration, the very point of which is, not that the man Jesus was a being under human limitations, but that he who was in the Form of God, came into the finite, and was subject to human conditions. Then, again, Christ himself declared, not that a human soul, hid in his person, was placed under limitations, but more—that the Son, that is, the Divine person—for the word *Son* is used as a relation to the *Father*—the Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do; for the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth. He also prays —'Glorify me with thine own self, with the glory that

I had with thee before the world was'—a prayer which cannot be referred to the human soul, even if there was a human soul hid in his person; for that soul could speak of no glory it once had with the Father. Hence, the supposition of a human soul existing distinctly, and acting by itself, clears no difficulty; for the Son, the divine part, or I should rather say, the whole Christ, is still represented as humbled, as weak, as divested of glory, and existing under limitations or conditions that do not belong to Deity."

Dr. B., therefore, maintains not a virtual or occasional union, but a real and substantial union between the human and the divine in the person of Christ. The former he rejects as mere copartnership and collocation; and shows that upon such a theory, "the whole work of Christ, as a subject, suffering Redeemer, is thrown upon the human side of his nature, and the divine side standing thus aloof, incommunicably distant, has nothing in fact to do with the transaction, other than to be a spectator of it." Hence he denies the common Trinitarian theory of "two distinct or distinctly active subsistences in the person of Christ." But checking himself, wisely, in our estimation, he intimates that the whole subject is enveloped in mystery, and insists that we have no right to speculate upon it! Some will think he has himself overstepped the limits of human knowledge here, and indulged in a hazardous and somewhat intangible speculation; but he very justly and strikingly remarks (p. 151) that "to insist upon going beyond the expression, investigating the mystery of the person of Jesus, when it is

given us only to communicate God and His love, is in fact to puzzle ourselves with the vehicle, and rob ourselves of the grace it brings."

Whether there were two natures in one person, as is generally believed, or two persons in one nature, as some appear to teach, or one person in one nature, as Dr. B. seems to hold, within the restrictions of a human body, we give him credit for shrewdness and consistency when he says "that the subject is not psychologically or physiologically investigable, because it does not lie within the categories of ordinary natural humanity." It certainly involves difficulties which baffle the finite intellect, and admits of no adequate solution. Even if the impassibility of God could be proved with the precision of a mathematical theorem, the mystery would remain that Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal, suffered and died for the redemption of the lost. O! it would indeed be well if all of us had our minds "moderated," not merely by "philosophy" or "reason," but by religion, as to "set boundaries to our questions" upon these high themes; and that instead of speculating, we were more inclined to reverence and worship. Therefore we cheerfully indorse the following statement by Dr. B., the spirit of which, it seems to us, carried out, would make sad havoc of all our speculations, and his among the rest:—"The mystery of the divine-human must remain a mystery. I cannot fathom it. Reason will justify me in no such attempt. And when we come to speak of the sufferings and death, I would withhold myself in like manner, and require myself to look only at what the suf-

ferings and death express. It is commonly held that God is impassible, though we never hesitate to affirm that He is displeased thus and thus, and this displeased state is, so far, of course, an un-pleased or painful state. But, even if it were otherwise, if God, in His own nature, were as unsusceptible as a rock, that fact would justify no inference concerning the person of Christ. The only question is, whether God, by a mysterious union with the human, can so far employ the element of suffering, as to make it a vehicle for the expression of His own Grace and Tenderness; whether, indeed, God can be allowed, in any way, to exhibit those Passive Virtues, which are really the most active and sublimest of all virtues, because they are most irresistible, and require the truest greatness of spirit. Therefore, when we come to the agony of the garden, and the passion of the cross, we are not, with the speculative Unitarian, to set up as a dogma, beforehand, and as something that we perfectly know, that God can set himself in no possible terms of connection with suffering; nor believing, with the common Trinitarian, that there are two distinct natures in Christ, are we to conclude that no sort of pang can touch the divine nature, and that only his human part can suffer. We cannot thus intrude into the interior of God's mysteries. We are only to see the Eternal Life approach our race—Divine Love manifested and sealed; the Law sanctified by obedience unto death; pardon certified by the 'Father forgive;' peace established and testified by the resurrection from the dead."—p. 163.

Not only does Dr. B. concede the utter impossibility of

speculating satisfactorily on "the contents" of Christ's nature, beyond what is plainly revealed in the Scriptures, but he admits also the profound and inscrutable mystery of the Godhead, whether in its relations to the nature of the Son, or to the nature of the Father. After all that he himself has adventured upon this subject, touching the modes of the Divine revelation, the nature of the Trinity, and especially the nature of the Divine Logos, or Jesus Christ as pre-existing in the Form of God, or as constituting the Form of God, he maintains, in no ambiguous terms, the absolute impossibility of knowing any thing about it! It is not to be held, he says, in the modes or measures either of logic or language, thus vindicating the fundamental principle which we have endeavored, in the whole compass of this volume, to set forth and establish. Even as revealed, he admits that God will not be cleared of obscurity and mystery. "A vast circle of mystery will be the back ground of all other representations, on which they will play and glitter in living threads of motion, as lightning on a cloud, and what they themselves do not reveal of God, the mystery will—a Being infinite, undiscovered, undiscoverable, therefore true" (p. 145.) On this ground he will not venture, even after his grand argument, proving that the Trinity is "a device of revelation," or a simple mode of the Divine manifestation, to say (p. 175) that "the Trinity is "*modal* only," and finds a necessity of answering the question touching this point "*obscurely.*" He ventures, indeed, but with some hesitation, to call the Trinity an INSTRUMENTAL TRINITY, and the Persons INSTRUMENTAL

Persons, and instantly protests against all speculations on the subject, rejects every thing like the *Triad* of Plato, to which his own theory, as we shall presently show, bears a wonderful resemblance, and adds, (p. 179,) "Let us rather baptize our over-curious spirit into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and teach it quietly to rest in what of God's infinite nature it may there receive."

In this way Dr. B. acknowledges some of the highest truths of our holy faith, and proves that he is in little danger, as some have feared, of lapsing into the shallow system of Socinian belief, or ceasing to adore Jesus Christ as God over all, blessed forever.

Perhaps it may be proper, before proceeding further, to say something respecting Dr. B.'s theory of language, as he sets forth that as the basis of all his other theories, making the Trinity and Incarnation modes or vehicles of the Divine expression, as language is the mode and vehicle of human expression. So that the Incarnation is a sort of language, the principal "moment" of which is, its capacity to reveal the absolute God. Dr. B. maintains that there is a sort of *Logos* in language, a secret or mystic form of expression, derived from the harmony which exists between the world of matter and the world of spirit, the one supplying types or images of the other, inadequate, indeed, and partaking somewhat of their terrestrial origin; but setting forth, in a reflective way, the spiritual facts, truths, or emotions which they represent. And hence he reasons, by a sort of remote and fanciful analogy, that there is in

God, as an Absolute Being, a *Logos*, or power of self-expression, which, in finite and imperfect forms, reveals to our minds and hearts the true God and Eternal Life. This, he says, is the *Logos* of St. John, the Word made flesh, who dwelt among us, and whose glory we beheld, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. So that the Incarnation is the finite impersonation of God in this manner; the *Logos*, or capacity for self-embodiment or self-expression, taking the form of a finite person, and going forth, like a living speech, (logos,) to make known and communicate the Divine. The atonement, of course, falls under the same category, being only a further expression of the love and pity of God, in striking, but not necessary forms.

As to Dr. B.'s speculation touching the origin and history of language, we have nothing to say. Upon this point, we could admit some of his positions, and yet not accept his theory. So, also, in reference to the imperfect, half-terrestrial character of language, and its inadequacy *fully* to set forth all spiritual realities, upon which he insists so much, few persons who have indulged in any reflection, will have much difficulty. But we maintain, in opposition to Dr. B., that there are cases in which language *entirely* loses this earthly figurative character, and becomes a pure, and, in one sense, literal type of spiritual realities. Take, for example, the word spirit, originally signifying *breath*, or wind, and in the form of the all-embracing air, symbolizing God, the universal, all-pervading presence. This term, so terrestrial in its origin, gradually casts off its

earthly, and even symbolic character, and finally becomes a literal name, representing the infinite, *immaterial* Spirit. So that, for the very purpose of excluding all materiality, all ideas of space, form, figure, and extension, we say with emphasis, *God is a Spirit!* The word here, though inadequate and earth-born, sets forth a *spiritual* (not ærial or breathly) idea.

Take, also, the word *right*, one of the most abstract and comprehensive terms in the language. Originally it signifies straightness, or a straight line, then conformity to a rule, measure or standard, then by an easy transition, the rule or standard of right itself, the great and all-comprehending law of the spiritual world—Divine law, the principal fountain of right, the law of laws, in other words, the absolute and essential principle of right, which governs all things, governs even God. For it is impossible—we reason from the very conception—that the absolutely perfect Being should think any wrong, intend any wrong, do any wrong. Here, then, the word right loses all its material quality, and represents literally the most absolutely spiritual and comprehensive principle in the universe.*

Language, as a whole, is indeed inadequate, but not so inadequate as to be incapable of marking off, or *de-fining*, and that with considerable *pre-cision*, the domain of truth from the domain of error; so that even a dogma or a creed, provided it be a scriptural dogma or creed, and not a mere speculative or "wooden" one, may yet be true, true in the

* The same remarks apply to the words abstraction, mind, heart, beauty, understanding, substance, essence, reason, truth, holiness, (wholeness,) virtue, and many others. Moreover, they are literal, not figurative terms. They are, in reality, names of spiritual things.

highest and most perfect sense of the term. Were it otherwise, it would be impossible to separate, *cut off*, and protect truth from error, or feel any degree of confidence that what we believed might not after all be grievous falsehood. Poison would commingle with the food of the soul; and we should find, after all our care in the study of the Scripture, that we had received our death from what we deemed the means of nourishment and life! What is *true* in theology, is certainly a possible question; otherwise all our beliefs are uncertain and vain. Moreover the life or the feeling cannot be sustained without a basis, or means of sustenance. All feeling or sentiment is suspended on thought, and all thought hangs upon fact or truth. The one is essential to the other, as essential as fuel to fire, or cause to effect. You may call it dogma, or doctrine, or creed, it comes to the same thing; no practical religion can live without it; and just in proportion to the fullness, clearness and comprehensiveness of our doctrinal views, will be the strength, symmetry and fruitfulness of our piety.

It is true, that, back of all our words, and all our creeds, and all our knowledge, lies a vast and undiscovered region of mystery; still, relatively to our moral exigencies and duties, we can know enough of God, enough of Jesus Christ, and the way of life, to be certain that we are in possession of the truth, in distinction from error and falsehood. So that there is a divine creed; and not only so, but a true and legitimate logic, or mode of argument for its defence. Of course we abandon, as readily as Dr. B., the mere logic of words, and epecially that species of dry

and ridiculous argumentation which reasons from a single expression, and by a system of false or assumed premises or inferences, runs into all sorts of absurdities. But an appeal to the testimony of the Scripture, to ascertained fact and principle, to "thus saith the Lord," as well as to the very nature and reason of things, is always legitimate and proper. As to *insight* or intuition being opposed to fact or argument, or, if you please, to a legitimate logic, it is pure nonsense. For what is reasoning from insight or intuition, but an appeal to the facts of consciousness, or the native convictions of the soul, in which all men are agreed, or to the facts and principles of nature as revealed to the all-penetrating mind?

Hence, *words* or expressions are to be estimated according to circumstances, being more or less perfect, more or less spiritual, as the case may be; yet, upon the whole, capable of expressing the full extent of the Divine revelation, and of our knowledge respecting it.

The fact is, when our knowledge is clear and definite, then our words are clear and definite,—when obscure and general, then our words are limited and dark. Dr. B. himself admits that words can be used with the utmost precision, as in the case of mathematical truths, and even of some metaphysical truths, such as space, time, cause, right, truth, and so forth. Whence we conclude, that whenever, in theology or morals, our ideas are clear and adequate, then also is our language clear and adequate. Spiritual truths take a dress or an image, or rather a representation, in language, which conforms to their nature.

And just as our knowledge becomes more elevated and expansive, our language becomes more pregnant and expressive. The difficulty in theology lies not so much in language, as in the *mysterious* nature of some of the subjects about which it is employed. Doubtless the Word of God is perfect, that is, it is as perfect as language can be made; but no language can adequately set forth the interior nature of God, or the great Mystery of the Trinity, the Incarnation and the Atonement. But so far as they *can be set forth*, this is done by the language of Revelation. Of course it must be interpreted by reference to the principles of language in general, and in a liberal and generous spirit; but the great aim must ever be to find out the mind of God. Reference must be had to the genius and scope of the whole; no words must be wrested from their natural signification; and the resultant force or import of the whole must be accepted as the true signification. But we cannot come to the interpretation of the Scripture, as to that of the writings of Wordsworth or Goethe; though Dr. B. seems to intimate that both ought to be interpreted on the same principles; for these great poets, after all, are fallible, both as to thought and expression. Their inspirations, even if genuine, nay more, even if of the same nature as those of the Scripture, which we deny, are only occasional and limited, not universal and absolute. But God speaks in the Scripture. He uses holy men as his vehicles; and hence their style borrows something from their individual character; but God speaks in them and by them. His, then, are the thoughts, and his also are the words. A

great writer, Dante or Shakspeare, for example, embodies his thoughts in words; hence their surpassing freshness and power. The very diction of such an one is a sort of incarnation of its author. Hence we call anything resembling it Dantesque or Shakspearean. So the diction of the Bible is divine. If it consists of words, they are divine words; of forms, they are divine forms. This, if we mistake not, Dr. B. admits. For example, the *atonement* is not only a *fact*, but a *word* or a *form*. As a *fact*, its nature must be ascertained by the history and teachings of the New Testament. In this sense, it is a Divine fact. But the *word* or *form* represents it; and to represent it properly must be a perfect word or form. Other words or forms may be used to express it; as, sacrifice, propitiation, expiation, ransom, and so forth; and they, too, are divine. They have a common origin, and a common import. Indeed, they express precisely the same thing; so that under them, we see the one fact, and the one form. This, Dr. B. admits is of sacred origin. It was prepared by God himself, in the old Jewish ritual, and is really, as he expresses it, a divine form. It is, then, a true and an adequate form. What then is its import? Does it involve the idea of substitution—of *life* for *life*, and consequent satisfaction in law, for that is the ordinary meaning of the word atonement or propitiation? So also as to the Trinity and Incarnation. The Father is God; the Son is God; and the Holy Ghost is God. These, says Dr. B., are revealed to us in finite forms. What, then, do they teach? That God is somehow Three in One, and One in Three. But how can that be? It is

a mystery, we reply, and that is all that can be said. If, however, you proceed to say they are mere names, or modes of revelation, given us for expression only, in other words, finite manifestations of the absolute God, you assume more than the Scripture authorizes. What saith the Word of God here? What is its plain and obvious teaching? Something, we conceive, like this; that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are one, one in nature, in design and in action. But how? It is silent. There commences the region of mystery, where investigation must pause, and reason grow calm and reverent.

This, then, so far as it lies within the scope of our faculties, is a question not so much of language or of logic, as of fact. The Trinity is granted by Dr. B. So also is the Incarnation. But in what sense? We reply, only as modes of the Divine manifestation. In his view they belong to the sphere of language or expression, on which ground he is compelled to deny their actual subsistence in the nature of God. He may hesitate—indeed, he does hesitate to avow this; yet, it is the argument of his whole book. He makes the Trinity a series of impersonations. Hence, the incarnation or embodiment of God, in his view, amounts to little more, in the end, than the incarnation or embodiment of a divine capacity in a human form, just as the universe is the embodiment of a divine capacity in a material form. The whole belongs to "the sphere of language or expression." God is thus personified—personified not as the absolute God, but as Father, Son, and Holy

Ghost. We have the *Logos* in language; the *Logos* in the universe; the *Logos* in Christ!

Yet, Dr. B. objects to all theory and speculation upon this great subject, and represents the Trinity as an inscrutable mystery, transcending not only all the measures of logic and language, but of conception and thought!

In what, then, does his error upon this fundamental subject consist? We reply unhesitatingly, in violating his own conceded principles, and lapsing, inconsciously to himself, into one of the boldest and wildest speculations touching the subsistence of Jesus Christ in the bosom of the Father. "In the beginning was the Word, (*Logos*, *Word*, or *Reason*, the *Revealer*, as we understand it, or more simply, the Son and Image of God,) and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." This is the language of St. John, and expresses, in a very simple and striking way, the supreme Divinity and Incarnation of Jesus Christ. We found fault even with Athanasius, the father of the Nicene Creed, and the great champion of orthodoxy in the early church, for speculating on the eternal Sonship of Christ; and, especially, for describing the "everlasting procession of God from God," or of the Son from the Father, as heat from fire, or light from the sun. Will it be believed, after our quotations from Dr. B., that he falls into a speculation still more fanciful and hazardous, and makes the Divine Logos, or Word, which became incarnate in the man Jesus Christ, to consist in the

Divine Capacity for *self expression*, the *Form* or *Image* (*Imago*, *Eikon*) of God, or his power to mirror, represent or embody himself, as in the material universe, or in man; thus making the Trinity (his cavils to the contrary notwithstanding) a mere Trinity of *manifestation* or *expression?*

In defending the doctrine of Christ's divinity or incarnation against what he deems the false views of the Orthodox on the one hand, and the heresy of the Unitarians on the other, and anxious, as it seems to us, to set the matter in harmony with his own philosophical, or religious preconceptions, he makes the term Son a mere relative to that of Father, and finds the connection of the Incarnate Word with the Divine Unity, in the power of *self-expression*, *self-imagination*, or, as we should say, *self-embodiment*, possessed by the absolute God, a speculation as bold and intangible as that of Plato, Origen, or Schelling. For what is the *Logos* of Plato, particularly as developed by the Neo-Platonists, but the self consciousness (Nous) or *self-imagination* of God, whom that old but lofty pagan actually denominates the Son of God, by whom he made the worlds? So, also, according to Dr. B., the Holy Spirit is *God in action*, God as a *presence;* the very idea of Plato's Areté, or God of the world; that is, God actually working in the universe. These, then, says Plato, are one, but not self-subsistent; first, the absolute God; secondly, God expressed or revealed; and, thirdly, God in action—the two latter being merely embodied attributes, or embodied impersonations!

Thus, too, according to Dr. B., the whole Trinity per-

tains to revelation, and depends on words or forms. It is modal, or, at best, instrumental; and, therefore, has no basis in the very nature of the absolute God.

That we are not misrepresenting Dr. B. here, the reader will be satisfied by turning to pp. 139, 140—145 of his book, where he speaks of the *Logos* as the *self-imagination* of God, and the Trinity and Incarnation as "devices of revelation," and thus accounts for, or rather justifies, the Incarnation on natural grounds; leaving this irresistible conclusion, that the whole matter pertains to the mode of revelation, or to the vehicle and instrument of the Divine manifestation.

Should Dr. B. reply that he has himself protested against such a construction, or such an inference, then we must be permitted to say that he has protested against himself, and proved, by such admission, that his favorite theory does not entirely satisfy his own mind. Indeed, the very point we are now aiming to prove is that Dr. B. violates his own conceded principles, and speculates beyond his data or powers of investigation. He is himself, to some extent, conscious of this, and therefore throws in a caveat at the close of his discourse, which, in its broadest and most liberal signification, nullifies all he has said.

But we will develop his argument a little, and let our readers judge for themselves.

Dr. B. first takes us to the Absolute God, and gives us a representation of his essential nature as unrevealed; a representation which may or may not be true, as it is understood by himself and others. He gives us the conception

of a God, who is nothing but Being, absolute Essence or Existence, without consciousness, or conscious reflection, a being without thought, without affection, without personality, that is without any thing which is tangible to our minds, the absolute God of Kant, Fichte, Hegel and Schelling, who is so absolute that he is not even conscious of himself, has neither intellect nor will, freedom nor volition, but is simply Being, impersonal, unreflective, infinite, everlasting.

That God has no thought, no action and reaction, no reflection and deliberation such as we finite creatures have, is certainly true. But is there no thought but what is finite? Is there nothing in God corresponding to what we call intuition, or insight, that is, the vision or consciousness of universal ideas, like those of space, time, cause, truth, right, unity, infinity, eternity, and so forth; no sense or consciousness of beauty, love, perfection, no self-knowledge, and self-blessedness? Does the mere infinitude of God destroy his conscious and moral nature, his personality and will, his self-intuition and self-enjoyment? But all that Dr. B. means to affirm is, that without a revelation we can know him only as Being, not that he is not infinitely more than this, but that without some manifestation of himself in finite forms, we can know him only as absolute and impersonal existence.* We say, that without a revelation we

* "Nature," says Hegel, "is God coming to self-consciousness. God reveals himself in creation, or in the universe, by a series of eternal unfoldings, some in matter and some in mind." "The Divine Being," says Schelling, "once hidden, has a perpetual tendency to self-revelation. The Absolute reproduces himself in nature, in man, and in Jesus Christ." This is *Pantheism*.

cannot know him at all, either as Being or as any thing else. And therefore it is of no use to speculate how he may reveal himself. A priori, we can say nothing upon the subject. He *has* revealed himself, in nature, in man and in Jesus Christ; and we can reason about God only as thus revealed. We cannot go back of the revelation and say, God, as a possible being, must reveal himself so and so. The Incarnation can be justified *a posteriori*, that is, as a matter of fact. It has revealed God—it has brought him home to our heart. It has made him real and warm to our spiritual and immortal nature. Above all, it has given him to us as a Saviour and a friend, who reconciles us to himself, and makes us partakers of his glory. But this is all we can say of him in such connection. Beyond this simple, practical statement of the matter, all is useless hypothesis and conjecture.

We are aware that Dr. B. has given us his "bald representation" of the unrevealed or absolute God, not as the reality of the case, but as a basis for his argument touching the Trinity and Incarnation as the necessary *instruments* or vehicles of his self-manifestation. He must give himself to us, he says, through finite forms and processes, by actions and reactions, by contrasts and contradictions. So that our minds, using these as a sort of ladder, must laboriously struggle upward to the conception of his Essence and glory. That this is a false representation, we will not affirm dogmatically; but it deserves inquiry, whether, as spiritual beings ourselves, having original powers, and the capacity of forming universal ideas, we do not

possess, or at least gain, instinctively, the idea of the infinite, the perfect and eternal, by an intuition; whether, from the multiform, the relative, the conditioned, the finite, the formal, we do not, by the necessary action of our own minds, rise to the conception of the One, the Absolute, the Unconditioned, the Infinite and the Spiritual, that is, of the Eternal God. Moreover, being moral beings, having native conceptions of the true, the right, the beautiful, the good, do we not transfer these ideas or conceptions to the idea or conception of God; so that, from our very nature—without sounds, colors, changes, actions and reactions, and above all, *contradictions*—we gain the conception of the one great, all-perfect, all-glorious God, in whom we live and move and have our being?

This, we think, is the philosophical as well as scriptural view of the matter; but according to Dr. B., God first *struggles* to reveal himself by contrasts and contradictions, and then we *struggle* to discover him, by the same contrasts and contradictions! He has first to dramatize or distribute himself, like Brama on the stars, while we, spectators of the drama, have to interpret it as best we can!

But the difficulty in our present state does not seem to be in gaining the idea of an infinite God, as in completely realizing it, especially in reaching the conviction that He loves us, notwithstanding our guilt, and will pardon our iniquity. The great problem to be solved is, "How shall man be just with God?" For this an Incarnation seems absolutely necessary. Had we never sinned, the Incarnation, *for aught that we know*, might never have taken place. Man

as innocent knew God, and knew Him perfectly. Formed in His image, the idea, the love, the presence of God were familiar to his mind. Indeed, he lived in God as his natural element. Love divine bathed his spirit, and kept it radiant and beautiful. His whole nature mirrored the infinite, as the ocean mirrors the heights of the starry heavens.

It is the fall, so far as we can see, that necessitates the incarnation. Man had forgotten God. Wandering from his centre and his end, he became debased and wretched, "without God and without hope in the world." On which account, God interposed by an incarnation and atonement to bring him back to himself. "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Hence, we conclude that to be *incarnated*, is a very different thing from being *inworlded*. A descent to earth in human form, for the salvation of the lost by means of suffering and death, bears, to say the least, a very different aspect from creating the worlds by his all-commanding fiat. In the one case God spake and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. And thus, while the Creator of the earth and skies, he is ever above them and beyond them. In no proper sense are they God, or a part of God; and if God is in them, by a manifestation, or a presence, it is simply as a power or an agency. But in the case of the Incarnation, he took upon him the form of a man, veiled his Deity in flesh, and went forth in the man Jesus Christ, in toil and sorrow and death, to work out the salvation of the lost.

The Incarnation, therefore, while in beautiful harmony

with the ordinary methods of the Divine manifestation, seems to possess a character of its own, which cannot be explained, by reference to the creation of the world, or other methods in which God has made himself known to his creatures. Nature, indeed, as a product of God, or a revelation of his glory is a great mystery. How the divine is *inworlded* we cannot tell; so that in this particular sense, there exists some analogy between the *creation* and the *Incarnation.* But no one is authorized to affirm that these facts are identical in their nature, or that the Incarnation does not involve a mystery, over and above that of the creation of the world. "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, believed on in the world, received up into glory." Here, evidently, is something far transcending any mere manifestation of Divine power, wisdom, and love, in the natural creation, or in the frame-work and constitution of the human mind. God, though *inworlded*, or embodied in the world, is yet not identical with the world, otherwise pantheism is true, and the world ought to be worshipped! But he is identical with Jesus Christ. They are one. The union here is absolute and peculiar, and far transcending anything existing in nature. God is not only in Christ, but in Christ in such a way, that the latter is truly God, and therefore an object of trust, adoration and worship. So that, we naturally infer that the Trinity and Incarnation are not merely "devices" or, if you please, vehicles and instruments by which the "Absolute God" reveals himself to man, but some-

thing far beyond this, something pertaining to the very nature of God himself.

Of course we will not enter the arcana of the Divine essence, or speculate upon what Dr. B. calls "the contents" of this great mystery, whether in the nature of the absolute God, or of Jesus Christ, "God manifest in the flesh," for this would be going beyond our depth; but we do say, that there is something here far beyond all expression, which we can neither fathom nor comprehend. What we object to is, that Dr. B. should confine this mystery to the mere revelation or expression of the Divine nature, and make the incarnation of Christ identical, in some degree, with the creation of the Universe; in other words, represent it as a mere finite impersonation or one of a series of impersonations of the one Absolute God. Of the *mode* of existence or action here, we say nothing; for both in philosophy and in religion, we are often competent to say *what* is, but not, *how* it is. That Jesus Christ is God incarnate,—that he existed from eternity in God, or "with God," to use the expression of St. John; nay, that from all eternity he "was God," the true and everlasting Life, we affirm in the most unequivocal terms; for this is but to repeat the plain letter of the Scripture itself. But there we leave the high mystery, without a single word of explanation.

Dr. B., however, interposes just at this point, and affirms that the *Logos*, the Word, which in time was "made flesh," as St. John affirms, in the person of Jesus Christ, the "only begotten Son of God," was "the capacity in God for self-expression, or self-embodiment, such as we see

in the creation of the natural universe. Speaking of the absolute God, as utterly unknown and unapproachable without a revelation, he proposes to consider (p. 145) "by what process he will be revealed," and adds as follows:

"There is in God, taken as the Absolute Being, a capacity of self-expression, so to speak, which is peculiar—a generative power of form, a creative imagination, in which and by aid of which, He can produce Himself outwardly or represent Himself in the finite. In this respect God is wholly unlike us. Our imagination is passive, stored with forms, colors, and types of words from without, borrowed from the world we live in. But all such forms, God has in Himself, and this is the Logos, the Word, elsewhere called the Form of God. Now this Word, this Form of God in which he sees himself, is with God, as John says, from the beginning. It is God mirrored before his own understanding, and to be mirrored, as in fragments of the mirror before us. Conceive him now as creating the worlds, or creating worlds, if you please, from eternity. In so doing he only represents, expresses, or outwardly produces Himself. He bodies out his own thoughts. What we call the creation, is, in another view, a revelation only of God, His first revelation.

"And it is in this view that the Word, or Logos, elsewhere called Christ, or the Son of God, is represented as the Creator of the worlds. Or it is said, which is only another form of the same truth, that the worlds were made by or through him, and the Apostle John adds, that

without Him is not any thing made that was made."—(pp. 145–6.)

So, also, (p. 168,) he says: "Thus the Divine Word or Logos, who is from eternity the Form or in the Form of God, after having first bodied him forth in the creation and government of the world, now makes another outgoing from the Absolute into the human, to reside in the human, as a being of it; thus, to communicate God to the world, and thus to ingenerate in the world goodness and life, as from Him."

The Incarnation, then, is an *impersonation* of the Logos, or the capacity of God for self-expression, such as exists in the material creation. But we need to see and to feel God acting in us, as well as set before us; hence, according to Dr. B., follows another *impersonation* of God, that, namely, of the Holy Spirit. And "as action of any kind is representable to us only under the conditions of movement in time and space, which, as we have seen, is not predicable of the Absolute Being." * * "God, in act, will be given us by another finite, relative *impersonation*." (p. 17.)

Without noticing the circumstance that Jesus Christ is nowhere in the Scripture called the Form of God, but is simply stated to be in the Form, image, or likeness of God, and thence "equal with God;" without dwelling upon the consideration that the Word or Logos of St. John, is represented not as a *capacity* or an *attribute* of God, but as a *person* or an *agent*, nay, as *absolutely God himself*, and that

not within the conditions or restrictions of time; for "the Word was not only "with God," but "was God," *from the beginning*, nay, "was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father"—without dwelling upon either of these considerations, we here call attention to the *clear* and well *defined* theory of Dr. B., upon which his whole system of belief pertaining to the Trinity and Incarnation is made to hinge. It is simply this. There is one Absolute God who personifies himself in three finite forms, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. These personifications grow out of the necessities of revelation, and are relative only to our minds. In a word, the *Trinity* is a mere "device" of revelation, is *modal* or *instrumental*, and serves this grand purpose, and this only, namely, to give us the one true and absolute God. Jesus Christ is the Logos incarnate, in other words, an impersonation of the *Form* or *self-imagination* of God; while the Holy Spirit is an impersonation of the *Divine energy*, or God as acting in us and through us. "Thus," he says, (p. 173,) "we have three persons or impersonations, all existing under finite conditions or conceptions. They are relatives, and in that view are not infinites, for relative infinites are impossible. And yet, taken representatively, they are each and all infinites, because they stand for and express the Infinite, Absolute Jehovah."

The object, then, of the Trinity is, simply, to reveal, to "dramatize" God, "to bring forth into life about us that

Infinite One, who, to our mere thought, were no better than Brama sleeping on eternity and the stars." *

Doubtless, the Incarnation and the Trinity serve to re-

* We can see no difference between the theory of Dr. Bushnell and that of Sabellius, as developed so learnedly and acutely from the fragments, which are all that remain to us of his extensive writings, by Schleiermacher and Neander, unless it be in this particular, that Sabellius is supposed sometimes to apply the name of Father to the absolute God, while Dr. B. uses it as a relative to that of Son, revealed in time, and representing not the absolute God, but that impersonation of him which is made by the incarnation. With this slight exception their theories are precisely alike. Sabellius first finds the absolute God, or what he terms the original *Monas*, or One, and makes the names Father, Logos, and Holy Ghost, designations of three different *phases*, under which the Divine Essence *reveals* itself. "How the one Divine Essence comes to be called by various names, according to the different relations, or modes of activity into which it enters, he sought to illustrate by various comparisons. What the Apostle Paul says about the relations of the multifarious modes of activity and gifts of one Spirit, who, persisting in his Oneness, exhibits himself, notwithstanding, in these manifold forms,—this, Sabellius transferred to the self-evolution of the Monad into the Triad. That which is in itself, and continues to be, one, presents itself, in its manifestation, as three-fold. He is said, also, to have made use of the following comparison, drawn from the sun. 'As in the sun we may distinguish its proper substance, its round shape, and its power of communicating warmth and light, so may we distinguish in God his proper self-subsistent essence, the illuminating power of the Logos, and the power of the Holy Spirit, in diffusing the warmth and glow of life through the hearts of believers.' He did not scruple to make use of the Church phrase, "three persons, tres personæ, but he took it in another sense, (Dr. Bushnell's) as denoting different parts, or personifications, which the one Divine Essence assumed according to varying circumstances and occasions. According as it behooved that God should be represented acting in this or that particular way, so would the same one subject be introduced in the Sacred Scriptures, under different personifications, as Father, Son, and Spirit. According to this theory, the self-development of the Divine Essence, proceeding forth from the unity of its solitary, absolute being, is the ground and presupposition of the whole creation.' The *self-expression*" (Dr. B.'s self-expression, self-imagination or *Logos*) of the Supreme Being, the, *ON*, becoming the Logos, is the ground of all existence. Hence, says Sabellius, 'God silent, is inactive; but speaking, is active. * * * 'To the end,' says Sabellius, 'that we might be created, the Logos came forth from God.' So, also, mankind sinning, it became necessary for that Archetypal Logos himself to descend into human nature, in order that he might perfectly realize the image of God in humanity, and redeem the souls which are akin to him."

"According to this system," says Neander, from whom we give it in a condensed form, "the personality of Christ has no eternal subsistence—it is a mere finite impersonation, and when the work of redemption is concluded, returns into the unity of God." How strikingly all this coincides with Dr. Bushnell's views, the most casual reader must acknowledge.

veal God to our minds; nay, more, to bring him home to our hearts. But is this all? Are we to affirm that these distinctions are resolvable into modes and conditions of revelation? Are we to assume that we so thoroughly understand God, as an absolute eternal Being, existing in modes, and possessing attributes, infinitely transcending all our capacities of thought and reason, as to say that he must so reveal himself; or that he is so absolutely one, as to possess in himself no basis for the revelation or manifestation of himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost? Of course we affirm nothing here, for we confess our profound ignorance of the interior nature of God. But we cannot allow Dr. B., or any one else, however acute, to assume more than we ourselves are authorized to assume upon this subject, or to affirm that the Trinity or Incarnation is a "device," mode, *vehicle*, or "*instrument*" of revelation, and nothing more. Indeed, Dr. B. is not satisfied with his own explanations; and, after all his speculations, rejects the term *modal* in application to the Trinity, and leaves himself and his hearers in a mystery as profound and inscrutable as ever. He prefers the word *instrumental Trinity*, and speaks hesitatingly of the persons in that Trinity as *instrumental persons;* and adds, that he will not speculate upon "the Contents of the Divine Nature," and prefers to be left "in a maze" upon the subject. He then contends for the Divine Unity, which no Trinitarian has ever denied, and, renouncing speculation, comes round to the simple conclusion, where we shall certainly meet him, that it is better far "to baptize our over curious spirits into the

name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and teach it quietly to rest in what of God's infinite nature it may there receive." He then speaks tenderly of the "immense outlay which God has made to communicate Himself to our race;" and remarks, with a feeling of devotion to which all Christian hearts must respond, "it is in this view that the Blessed Three come to me with a sound so dear, and a burden of love so rich."

Thus, by a happy inconsistency, Dr. B. vindicates the ineffable mystery of the Sacred Trinity; so that at the close of his elaborate, but unsatisfactory discourse, we find ourselves standing with him, before the throne of God and of the Lamb, protesting against his errors, and yet adoring together the one, true, and eternal God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; One in Three, and Three in One. Here, then, in this single practical view, we give him the right-hand of fellowship. Casting away all intangible speculations and theories as useless and worse than useless, and recognizing one God and one Saviour, who is above all, through all, and in all, let us go forth to enthrone Jesus Christ, in the hearts of our fellow men, as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

We now proceed to consider Dr. B.'s views on the subject of the Atonement, which may be regarded as the central truth of the gospel, forming, as it does, the basis of our hope for eternity, and the means of our restoration to the Divine image.

Before entering into any specific discussion of his main argument, we beg to note some things of a general kind pertaining to his discourse, which we think deserve attention.

1. In the first place, it was delivered before the Divinity School at Cambridge, to which place Dr. B. was invited under the supposition that his theological peculiarities had a strong bent towards the Unitarian system. Of course there could be no great harm in this; but it created a peculiar expectation on the part of his auditors, and imposed upon him a most delicate and weighty responsibility. It is well known that in that school, the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, the supreme Divinity of Christ, the doctrine of an expiatory atonement, and truths of a kindred character, are most earnestly combated. It is also well known that the students are of all shades of opinion, some of them going as far as Theodore Parker himself, and rejecting some of those truths of the Christian faith, to which the great body of Unitarians yet profess to cling. It was only a few years before, that Ralph Waldo Emerson, who denies the personality of God, and speaks of historical Christianity with contempt, as something entirely behind the age, had been invited, by the same school, to address them on a like occasion.* Such was the effect of

* It was in this address, delivered at the request of the senior class in the Divinity School, that Mr. Emerson spoke of the religious sentiment "as mountain air"—"the embalmer of the world"—as "myrrh, storax, and chlorine and rosemary;" and affirmed that the time is coming when we shall be taught to believe "in the identity of the law of gravitation, with purity of heart," "that the age of inspiration is not passed," that "a miracle is one with the blowing clover and the falling rain," and that "a true Christ is now, as always, to be made by the re-

his address that Dr. Andrews Norton, and the late Dr. Ware, Jun., felt themselves called upon to protest against this "latest form of infidelity," and even to defend the personality of God. One of the Professors of said Divinity School, now a distinguished politician, it is said, justified himself in abandoning his office, by remarking, that he could do no good there, for all the students were either *mystics*, *sceptics*, or *dyspeptics!* That such young gentlemen needed any special caution against the errors of the orthodox, may be safely denied. Possibly, also, it may be conceded, that they would be quite willing to take some severe hits themselves, provided they could only have the pleasure of seeing orthodoxy fairly demolished.

All this, however, we acknowledge would be of little account, were it not for another fact, with which the public are familiar. It is well known that Dr. B. has conceived the idea of a deeper and more comprehensive system of theological belief, under the broad banner of which the most discordant and even contradictory opinions may range themselves in perfect harmony. A bold idea—perhaps a generous one; yet, in view of all the possibilities in the case, an extremely difficult and even hazardous one. Eclectic philosophies, and even eclectic religions are

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ception of beautiful sentiments." In a word, he intimated that Christianity is a simple mythos, like the creeds of ancient Greece and Rome, a little more elevated and beautiful, to be sure, but, like them, historically *past*—in form and fact, imperfect and evanescent, and leaving behind it only a few elements of pure and permanent truth.

When these sentiments were denounced by some of the older professors, an "Alumnus" of the Divinity School, and at that time a pastor of one of the Unitarian churches in Boston, (Mr. Ripley,) undertook their defence, and on the grounds generally assumed by his brethren, made out a very plausible case.

somewhat the order of the day. They are especially popular with the subtle and daring metaphysicians and theologians of France and Germany. Conciliation or at-one-ment is the grand aim; but whether it can be accomplished, except by an extensive compromise on the part of the friends of truth, is a question yet in debate.

That such conciliation between Unitarians and Trinitarians, or between rationalists and orthodox, is utterly hopeless, we will not venture to affirm, and yet, at first blush, it would seem an impossibility to bring together those who love and adore Jesus Christ as the true God and eternal Life, and those who brand such love and worship as irrational and idolatrous. We cherish a high respect for some of the more devout Unitarians, who seem to be rising into a purer theological and religious atmosphere, but their only hope of rescue from the paralysing influence of their system, lies, we humbly conceive, in its utter abandonment. There are few men, moreover, to whose talents we pay a more cheerful homage than to those of our friend and brother, upon whose discourse we take the liberty of commenting, but we do not believe that they are equal to such a Herculean task.

But it will easily be seen that Dr. B. was bound, if possible, to construct his discourse in such a way, that it might help, not only "to reduce the theological antipathies" which exist between the orthodox and the Unitarians, "but lead to a reconstruction of their present theological affinities." He had it for an object, which he deemed inexpressibly desirable, to bring together, under some com-

mon theory, free from the difficulties which, in his view, embarrass both sides of the controversy, certain views of theological truth hitherto considered diametrically opposite. If, then, we find some apparently heterogeneous elements and arguments brought together in this elaborate and comprehensive discourse, it need occasion no surprise. The key to the solution of such a phenomenon may be found in its peculiar psychological and theological history.

We do not, of course, mean to convey the idea, that Dr. B. would knowingly yield any thing which he deemed true, to please the Unitarians or even the orthodox; but taking human nature as it is, and taking into account, also, his peculiar pre-conceptions and wishes, it would not be deemed strange, if, in his endeavor to conciliate opposite doctrines, he might himself fall into some serious errors, and only add one more to the various speculations which perplex the theological world.

2. Another thing worth noticing is the fact mentioned by Dr. B. himself, that he prepared his discourse, after having just "emerged from a state of protracted suspense, or mental conflict, in reference to what is called, theologically, the doctrine of the Atonement." The practical import or value (moment he calls it) of the doctrine had been sufficiently plain; but the difficulty had been to bring its elements into "one theologic view." Hence he tells us that the subject had been "hung up before him" for experiment and inquiry; and that now the needed "solution" had seemed to reveal itself to his mind.

Dr. B., it seems, understood the Atonement as a practi-

cal thing; but its relation to theology had puzzled him. He had relied on Jesus Christ as his hope, but he could not bring the fact into coherence or unity with his system of theological, or perhaps philosophical, belief.

His discourse, then, is proposed as a "true solution" of the doctrine of the Atonement, just as his first discourse was proposed as a "true solution" of the doctrine of the Trinity. Now every *solution* of this kind must come to us in the form of a speculation or a dogma, of which, in other parts of his volume, Dr. B. has discovered such intense horror.* Does it not, then, deserve inquiry, whether a solution of this kind, based, as it must be, on speculative grounds, is possible or even desirable in regard to either of these sacred mysteries, at least in our present, finite and imperfect condition of being. As in the case of the Incarnation, is there not, in this great fact of Atonement, both as to its methods and ends, something, at least, absolutely insoluble or mysterious? Will any philosophical dogma or speculation comprehend it? Will it be possible to make our argumentations upon such a subject cohere at all points, so that there shall not be left some apparent difficulty or even contradiction? If the thoughts of God are past finding out, may not his ways also be somewhat obscure? And if so, would it not be well to allow such high themes to continue to hang up before us as means of life, rather than of speculation? What, if we cannot

* That Dr. B. himself regards it in this light is evident from the close of his discourse, where he speaks of the view he has given, as a "speculative," "philosophical," or "scholastic" view, and not, therefore, to be preached.

make our notions respecting them quite coalesce? What if our reasonings fail at particular points, and must give way to worship and wonder? Will the truth perish on that account? Above all, will the great fact of atonement fail to justify and save the soul? Nay, will it not be an infinite benefit to confess our ignorance, and prostrate ourselves in adoration before the mystery?

We must confess that we are peculiarly jealous of all such speculative solutions, and especially of that philosophical eclecticism which embraces the most heterogeneous and even contradictory views. But it is easy to see the mote in our brother's eye, when we cannot perceive the beam that is in our own. It is one thing to oppose the dogmas of others, another to abandon our own. One benefit, however, we anticipate from Dr. B.'s discourses, and that is, a distrust of all philosophizing, and especially of all dogmatizing in religion; but he may depend upon it, thoughtful men will not reject dogmas in general, and retain his in particular. Upon this subject Dr. B. is by no means blind. He sees clearly enough that both the Trinity and Incarnation embrace the profoundest mysteries, which neither logic nor reason can solve; and every now and then he betrays a decided distrust of his own solutions. "We cannot set forth," he says, (p. 204,) "as a real and proper equivalent, any theoretic matter of ours concerning the life and death of Jesus Christ, which is the highest and most moving tragedy ever acted in this mortal sphere, a tragedy distinguished in the fact that God is the Chief Character, and the divine feeling moved in tragic earnest—

Goodness Infinite manifested through Sorrow—the passion *represented.*" Speaking of Christ as "the identification of the divine and the human, the Word become flesh," he adds, (p. 243,) "Unquestionably the whole matter of the transaction is mysterious, and will be." Yet he adds, inconsistently enough, "Unquestionably the whole matter is what it expresses." (Aye! but what is that? for it is not so much the *expression* we are concerned about, as the *thing* expressed.) "And in order to the fullest and most vivid power of the expression made, we want no mock solutions interposed;" (sure enough!) "but we want rather to behold the Divine brought into our human conditions of sorrow and pain—to accept the Incarnate Word thus, in simplicity, as a brother, looking never beyond what appears." "How does our poor human understanding labor and reel," he exclaims, in conclusion, "before this great mystery of godliness—height, depth, length, breadth, greater all than we can measure! God's loftiest work, in fact, that in which he most transcends our human conceptions, is the work in which he is engaged to save us. Creation is a mystery, the universe is a great deep; but, O! the deepest deep in all the abysses of God's majesty is here—in the work he does to unite us to Himself." (p. 274.)

To all this, Dr. B. will reply that his great object has been to rescue the doctrine of the Atonement from the region of dogmatics, and place it in that of expression and language to which it naturally belongs, and hence that the charge preferred against him, of speculating upon the subject like other dogmatizers, does not hold. But we

think it does hold; for no man can take the ground that the ideas of sacrifice, expiation, and atonement, in connection with the work of Christ, belong simply to the sphere of language or expression, and not to that of fact, doctrine, or reality, without some speculative or philosophical reasoning touching the very nature of that work. He must affirm, somewhat in a positive or dogmatic way, respecting the death of Christ, its nature and design, before he can sustain such a position. Language or expression may be figurative, and in itself inadequate; nevertheless, it stands for the reality, it expresses the reality; nay, more, it embodies the reality; and the instant a theologian says, the language, form, or expression of a fact means so and so, and for such and such reasons, he indulges himself in some kind of speculation, false or true, as the case may be. This very position of Dr. B.'s, that the ideas of sacrifice, substitution, expiation, and atonement, belong to the sphere of language or expression, is, like that on the Trinity, one of the boldest speculations of the times. It is based on the idea that the atonement is wholly subjective, or if objective at all, is objective only as a matter of *form*. The fact is, Dr. B. denies the substitutionary character of our Saviour's sufferings, and gives his reasons for such denial; and if that be not a dogma or speculation, we know not what is. But suppose, after all, it should turn out to be the true view; what then? Why, nothing; all we ask is, let it be fairly and honestly shown to be the true view. That, replies Dr. B., is what I have done. Very good; but on what grounds? The nature of the case and the reason

of things; in other words, by an appeal to our moral instincts and to common sense. So, then, you have been doing just what all theologizers claim to do, and you must take your chance with the rest. The question yet remains, what do the terms sacrifice, propitiation, atonement, express, in reference to the work of Christ? Or, if it suit you better, what does that work itself express? Is the atonement simply subjective—that is, a result produced in the experience of believers by the life and death of Jesus Christ, or is it not also objective, that is, a real expiation or sacrifice, on the ground of which God can be just, and yet justify him that believeth in Jesus? You say it is objective or sacrificial, as a matter of form or expression, but not as a literal reality. It has no relation, then, to the divine government, or the principles of eternal justice, and in no proper sense, forms a basis on the ground on which God can offer pardon to the guilty. Hence the words sacrifice, offering, ransom, propitiation, atonement, derived from ancient rites and usages, are figures of speech, the ordinary import of which evaporates the instant a man understands the philosophical, speculative or subjective view of your system of theology!

Of course we know perfectly well that Dr. B. admits the literality of the events which form the basis or means of the Atonement, that is, the sufferings and death of Christ; for he maintains very positively, that "the life and death of Christ become most thoroughly real, most truly powerful, only when they are offered in this objective form;" nay, that in this respect "he is a more real sacri-

fice than the sacrifice, a more real lamb than the lamb" of the ancient dispensation. But observe, while he admits the literality of the death of Christ, as a simple event, he makes the sacrificial or expiatory character of that event a mere form, projected by the mind, a mere ideal, so to speak, of the all-embracing imagination. The form, indeed, was prepared of old, but the mind takes that form, and throws it around the tragic events of our Saviour's career, and thus transforms them, by association of ideas, into a sacrifice or atonement proper. Thus his dogma, or opinion is, that Jesus Christ, or the atonement of Jesus Christ, is subjectively "a truth and a power" for the renovation of character, but not objectively a propitiatory sacrifice for the expiation of guilt.

But after all, even if we concede to Dr. B. that the import of the Atonement lies in the expression or form, it would yet remain for inquiry what that expression or form really signifies. Does it signify the substitution of the innocent for the guilty; or does it, in any proper sense, signify the offering of a sacrifice to justice, or, if you please, to love and justice combined, for the redemption of the world? Were the sufferings of Christ merely incidental, or were they vicarious? Was the agony of the garden or of the cross a common agony, the agony, for example, of a martyr? Or was there something mysterious here, something pertaining to the nature of a sacrifice? We do not, of course, inquire whether the sacrifice was literal or physical, in the same sense that the ancient

sacrifices were literal or physical; this no one affirms any more than Dr. B.; but the question is, was it a proper sacrifice—was it, in any true sense of the terms, an expiation or atonement for the sins of the world, such as the universal instincts of mankind demand, and such as all ancient sacrifices seem to portend? No, says Dr. B., if we understand him aright, for there was no altar, no priest, no victim. The death of Christ was a simple incident which occurred to him in the prosecution of his great work—the restoration of man to the lost image of God; nay, in one sense it was "a mere murder" by wicked men, without the form or import of a sacrifice, except in this, that it proved the love and benevolence of him who would not turn aside from his great work, even if death stood in the way. But that it had any effect in procuring pardon, except by producing penitence, or that it had any bearing, in the way of reparation and atonement, upon the Divine government or administration, is inconsistent with common sense and the moral instincts of our nature. This is the opinion or dogma of Dr B.—in fact the leading doctrine and speculation of his entire discourse; and it was to bring the ideas of sacrifice, atonement, expiation, and so forth, into harmony with this view, that he projected his theory of language or expression; so that while rejecting the old sacrificial and expiatory view of Christ's death, he might yet seem to retain it, and thus be heterodox and orthodox at the same time.

But in opposition to this, we maintain that while not a literal or physical sacrifice, in the sense attached to these

expressions by Dr. B., Jesus Christ was a true and proper sacrifice, and his death a true and proper expiation for the sins of the world. Here are both the priest and the victim, the altar and the offering. For while, in its outward and historical aspect, the death of Christ was a grievous outrage, a terrible crime, in its interior and spiritual aspect, it was an august sacrifice, an all-sufficient Atonement for the redemption of the world. "For such an High Priest became us," says St. Paul, "who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once when he *offered up himself.* * * For if the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"—Heb. VII. 26, 27; IX. 13, 14.

3. Another fact worth noting is, that Dr. B. acknowledges that the common theological or orthodox view of the atonement, namely, that it was a proper sacrifice or expiation for sin, the substitution of the innocent for the guilty, has, in all ages, engaged the affections of the pious, and exerted over them a transforming, life-giving influence. So, (p. 203) he says, making an admission which is fatal to his whole theory, "if the older and more venerable doctrine is repugnant, when speculatively regarded, to the most sacred instincts or sentiments of our

moral nature, and dissolves itself at the first approach of rational inquiry, is it nothing remarkable, is it not even more remarkable, that it should have supported the spirit of so many believers and martyrs, in so many trials and deaths, continued through so many centuries? Refuted again and again, cast away, trampled upon by irreverent mockeries, it has never yet been able to die—wherefore, unless there be some power of divine life in it?" True to the letter; and Dr. B. is never so eloquent as when making such admissions. Trampled upon, and apparently refuted again and again, and by himself among the rest, it is vital, and can never perish. It meets the wants of the sin-burdened spirit, and that will keep it fresh and vigorous till the end of time. Besides, it is plainly taught in the Scriptures, as Dr. B. over and over again admits. "I observe," says he, (p. 245,) "in the Scriptures, a large class of representations, such as speak of the *atonement* received, (achieved?) by Christ, his *sacrifice*, his *offering*, his *bearing the sins of many*, the holiest opened by his *blood*, the *curse* he became, the *wrath* he suffered, the *righteousness* he provided, which do not seem to have their natural proper place in the view here presented." (Dr. B.'s subjective view of the Atonement.) "I recollect, also, that around these terms of grace, the whole church of God, with but a few limited exceptions, have hung their tenderest emotions, and shed their freest tears of repentance; that by these the righteous good, the saints and martyrs of the past ages have supported the trial of their faith; that before these they have stood, as their altar of peace,

and sung their hymn of praise to the Lamb that was slain."

It is bold, it is even generous in Dr. B., thus frankly to admit, in the main, the practical power of the common orthodox view of the Atonement; even if he himself resolves it into a mere objective or liturgical form. He claims, indeed, that he has found a place for it in his subjective view. It belongs, he says, to the form of conception; in other words, to the imagination of the believer, transferring his own conceptions to the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ, and thus making the reality within him, a reality without him. It dissolves at the touch of reason, but springs up again, at the touch of imagination! As a fact or a doctrine it is null, as a figure or a form it is all in all! Or, to develop Dr. B.'s idea a little further, it belongs not to the sphere of theology, as a system or speculation, but to the sphere of esthetics and language. It is rather the rhetoric than the reality of the Gospel—the garb and form of faith, rather than its substance and soul! Hence he shows, in his introduction, (p. 103) that the rites and shadows of the Old Testament dispensation were intended "to prepare a language or a form," in which to embody the truths of Christianity; and therefore all those terms, *sacrifice*, *offering*, *blood*, *expiation*, *propitiation*, and *atonement*, belong not so much to the substance as to the form and vehicle of Christianity.

On this ground the types and "shadows of good things to come," remain shadows even after their fulfillment in Christ! They linger around the fact or substance which

they prefigured; nay, more, impress upon it their own liturgical image! The night, or perhaps we ought to say, the shadowy twilight, passes into the day, and hangs around it something of its own sombre drapery! The death of Christ is no sacrificial atonement, in itself considered, but it takes this character as a matter of form; so that the atonement and the form of the atonement are two different things, which must be duly distinguished! In a word, we are taken behind the scenes, and made to discover that what we had clung to as a fact, is but the shadow of a fact!

That the soul, oppressed and sorrowful by reason of guilt, demands an atonement, has been universally conceded. The idea, in fact, is written in the whole history of the man. Everywhere blood flows for sin. Everywhere conscience, sin-stricken, cries for a reparation, and attempts to offer it. This, indeed, is the main fact of the Jewish ritual. The whole system of the Mosaic faith turns upon the principle stated by St. Paul, that "without the shedding of blood, there is no remission." Sin must be "condemned" somehow. Suffering, agony, death, must expiate the dreadful evil. "Think intently," says the profound and penetrating Foster, expressing his own resistless conviction upon the subject, "Think intently on the malignant nature of sin; and if there be truth in God, it is inexpressibly odious to him. Then if, nevertheless, such sinners are to be pardoned, does it not eminently comport with the Divine holiness, is it not due to it, that in the very medium of their pardon, there should be some

signal and awful act of a judicial and penal kind, to record and render memorable forever a righteous God's judgment—estimate of that which he pardons?" In a word, the whole heart of humanity yearns for an expiation. But how does Dr. B. account for this fact? By replying that the soul of man, the soul even of the philosopher, demands an "Altar Form!" The "philosophic or subjective view," says he, (p. 271,) "must never exclude and displace the sacrificial and ritual view; for even the Christian philosopher himself will need often to go back to this holy altar of *feeling*, and hang there trusting in Christ's offering." An Altar Form! It sounds jejune enough, to say the least of it. And as to the idea of first philosophizing away the *fact* of sacrifice or atonement, and then going back to *hang upon the Form*, seems to us even ridiculous! Ah me! we want more than a form upon which to hang the weary spirit, wounded by sin. The heart, bleeding under a sense of guilt, refuses to be comforted, till it hang its hopes upon Christ himself, the great atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. That brings peace—perfect and eternal; and not only peace, but holiness and everlasting love. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

4. It is unfortunate that Dr. B. has made such singular use of the philosophical terms, introduced into use by the German transcendentalists, *subjective* and *objective*, and especially that he should have played, perhaps inconsciously to himself, with the variant meanings of the latter term. It tends greatly to perplex his arguments, and must, necessarily, puzzle the minds of persons not conversant with

nice distinctions in language and metaphysics. The word *subjective*, as any one sees, has reference to a *subject*, and describes any thing, whether real or imaginary, as existing passively or subjectively, in the mind,—all, for example, pertaining to thought, feeling, form, and so forth, mirrored in the individual consciousness. The word *objective* has reference to an *object*, and describes any thing existing by itself, irrespective of the mind of the individual or subject, not simply as a matter of form created or recognized by the mind, but as a matter of fact or palpable reality. For example, the conception of a tree, in my mind, is *subjective*, subjective, I mean, as a *conception*. It thus exists, as in a mirror, in the individual consciousness. But corresponding to this, it exists also as an object, separate from the mind, or, as the Germans say, has a separate *objective* reality. Thus the *subject* is the being thinking—the *object*, the being or thing thought of. But many of the German transcendentalists or spiritualists, as they call themselves, believe there is no real distinction between subject and object, the Me and the not Me, in other words, between spirit and form, soul and body, and thus run into a species of pantheism. The objective, in their view, is but the reflection or shadow of the subjective. God and the universe, nature and the soul, are one. In this way, has arisen among them a peculiar use of the term objective, as distinguishing the form of a thought, a feeling, or an idea, from the thought, feeling, or idea itself, but having no real, palpable, independent existence after all. In other words, they apply the term

objective to the *forms* or images projected or originated by the force of the all-embracing mind.

Now, it is in the latter sense that Dr. B. occasionally uses the word objective. Sometimes, indeed, he seems to mean by it the reality of Christ's death, or the reality of the atonement, as a matter of fact; but most frequently he means by it, the *form* of that fact, the "ritual," "sacrificial," "altar form," as he names it, projected by the mind of the Christian. As a fact, the death of Christ is real, but as an atonement or propitiatory, a form. This he styles his *objective* view of the atonement. The form, indeed, according to Dr. B., is first prepared for the mind, by the ritual usages of the old dispensation, but it never becomes a *fact*, except in the mind of the individual, or of the church. We must have *our Altar Form* in which to invest the death of Christ, and thus represent it, esthetically or imaginatively, before our mind's eye. So that the death of Christ is sacrificial or expiatory, not as a matter of fact, but as a matter of form; not as an objective reality, but as a subjective ritual.

In this way, it is perfectly clear to our minds that Dr. B.'s subjective and objective atonements are one and the same thing. The means are confounded with the end, the substance with the shadow, the thing with the result. The *subjective*, which exists in the mind or experience of the individual, projects the *objective*, gives it reality and force; in other words, by *association of ideas*, we ascribe to Christ the result which takes place in our own experience. At-one-ment becomes atonement,—reconciliation becomes sac-

rifice. As we are brought into *one* with God, by means of the life and death of Jesus Christ, so we say, by *a figure of speech*, borrowed from the ritual of the Old Testament dispensation, Christ is our atonement, our sacrifice, and expiation. The atonement proper, in distinction from the at-one-ment, is a mere ritual apparatus; or, to take Dr. B.'s favorite and poetical expression, a mere 'Altar Form' for the soul's beliefs and emotions in reference to Christ.

Thus, Dr. B.'s roundabout and elaborate method of reaching this simple conclusion is, after all, equivalent to the shorter cut of the Unitarian, who says, the whole matter is figurative and hyperbolical; and, consequently, the main thing, nay, the only thing real and practical here, is at-one-ment or reconciliation, produced in us, not by any sacrifice or atonement proper, but by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, as the Messenger of God.

5. But we must be permitted to remark further, that Dr. B.'s view of the atonement saves us from no difficulties, logical, theological, or moral. It is as much exposed to speculative objections as the old orthodox view; indeed, it is vastly more so. For, while the old view supposes only *one* grand difficulty or mystery, namely, the substitution of the innocent for the guilty, under the perfect administration of God, Dr. B.'s view, while seeming to relieve us from this difficulty, actually involves it, and many other difficulties besides. For upon his system, God becomes man; the Divine not only unites himself with the human, but becomes "identical" (Dr. B.'s own expression) with the human. The "curse of the law" yet comes upon him; if not as a

matter of justice, at least of accident. The shame, the horror and agony, yet fall upon his soul, in their most mysterious and appalling forms. Sin is yet "condemned" in the flesh of the Son of God. He yet passes through the ineffable anguish of the garden and of the cross. Supreme and eternal, the Sovereign of the seraphim, God manifest in the flesh, he yet submits to the Law, and yields it obedience even unto death! If he does not endure the "penalty of sin," he endures that which is its necessary effect; and it makes little difference, in this mystic drama, in which, as Goethe says," the divine depth of sorrow lies hid," whether you call it punishment or suffering. Sinless and perfect, he yet voluntarily submits to be treated as a sinner, and yields to death, in a form the most fearful and overwhelming, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage." The Infinite, as it were, becomes the finite; the changeless and impassive, the weak, the suffering, the dying. The Divine is here, Dr. B. affirms in the most plain and unequivocal terms; for, in his view, the Divine and the human, in the person of Christ, are "identical." The Son of God plunges, of his own free will, into the deepest abyss of woe; goes down, to use the language of Dr. B. himself, "below our malignity, that it may break itself against his Divine Patience," and all to rescue the guilty and the lost.

Absurd, impossible, contradictory! cries the philosophical sceptic, or the infidel worldling. To which Dr. B.,

like the rest of us, has only to reply that the "folly of God is wiser than man, and the weakness of God, stronger than man." And when his own spirit of doubt or unbelief rises up, can only save himself, like the weakest of his brethren, by prostrating his soul before the Cross of Christ, as an adorable mystery, transcending all the measures of science and reasoning, and to be understood, in its transforming power, only by the humble and contrite heart.

That God should become incarnate, is a wonder the most transcendent and amazing. But that God incarnate should descend into the abyss of our sin and shame, nay, should go down beneath the deepest deep of our malignity and wretchedness, to magnify his own law, vindicate his own justice and grace, and, above all, to rescue rebels from eternal death, is a wonder, if possible, yet more transcendent and amazing. If he did not endure "penal distributions," he did what was equivalent to it; at least, he did what was equally mysterious, equally wonderful. And, perhaps, this is all that we can, or ought to say of it. God grant that, at least, we may feel what can never be spoken, what, perhaps, can never be adequately understood even in eternity.

6. Finally, while Dr. B., in the outset, seems to reject the common orthodox view of the atonement, in the subsequent portions of his discourse, he makes the most desperate efforts to reclaim it. Indeed, he seems to be rejecting and reclaiming it all the while; as if, somehow, he could not abandon it; and yet, like a dear child that a mother must either give up, or from her poverty, fail to

nourish, he does not know what to make of it. At last, he seems to find a place for it, as we have seen, in his double subjective—objective view; and, after distrusting that also, he takes it once more to his heart, casting away his "philosophical," "speculative," "subjective" theory, as unfit for practical life, and rejoicing in the atonement as an "Altar Form" for his weary spirit! "If the soul, then, "he says, "is ever to get her health in freedom and goodness, she must have the Gospel, not as a doctrine only, but as a rite before her, a righteousness, a ransom, a sacrifice, a lamb slain, a blood offered for her cleansing before Jehovah's altar. Then reclining her broken heart on this," (on Christ, we hope he means, not on the imaginary form,) "calling it her religion—hers by faith—she receives a grace broader than consciousness, loses herself in a love that is not imparted in the modes of mere self-culture, and, without making folly of Christ by her own vain self-applications, he is made *unto her*, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption!"

We have now finished our general observations upon this discourse, and are prepared to look at its more interior and specific argument on the subject of the atonement.

After stating, in a brief and general way, his view touching the great end for which Christ came into the world, namely, "to renovate character, to quicken by the infusion of the Divine life;" in other words, "to be a Saviour, as saving his people from their sins," which Dr. B. calls his subjective view of the atonement, he intimates that there is a view wholly different from this, "an objective ritual-

istic view, one that sets him forth to faith, instead of philosophy, without which, as an Altar Form for the soul, Christ could not be the power intended, or work the ends appointed." These points he lays down for discussion, but previously, he proposes "to look at some of the opinions that have been held and advanced at different times, concerning the nature of the atonement." Under this head it would be supposed that Dr. B. would endeavor to give a fair and candid view of what may be termed the general belief of the Church, or, what is considered the scriptural, evangelical doctrine of the atonement. So far from this, he offers one of the most meagre, one-sided statements which we have ever seen, at least in the pages of one claiming to have the slightest respect for evangelical religion, and that not so much respecting the prevalent orthodox belief, as the various speculations which have been indulged respecting it, or the illustrations used to explain and enforce it. He mentions, for example, the apocryphal opinion of Irenæus, for which he gives no authority, and which we do not hesitate to pronounce a misrepresentation, that Jesus Christ "suffered death as a ransom paid to the devil, to buy us off from the claims he had upon us." Now such a notion is at utter variance with the spirit and purport of the writings of Irenæus, which are remarkably unspeculative, sober, and dignified, conforming, with slight exceptions, in a striking manner, to the simple teachings of the Holy Scripture.*

* Since writing the above, we have taken some pains to ascertain the real opinions of Irenæus, by a personal examination of his writings; and we do not hes-

Dr. B. also refers to what he terms "the truly horrible doctrine of Calvin," that "Jesus Christ descended into hell,"

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itate to affirm that he nowhere teaches the gross absurdity ascribed to him by Dr. B. He everywhere represents the advent of Christ as a means of destroying the works of the devil, "overturning Satan"—"overcoming the devil," and, in one place, "destroying (destruens nostrum adversarium) our adversary, the devil." He figuratively speaks of Jesus Christ as God incarnate, "who redeemed us by his blood," who gave himself a ransom "for the captives," and rescued us "from the dominion of Satan," not by "force," but by "justice," speaking of this subject in a most edifying and scriptural manner.

In justice, however, to Dr. B., to whose charge we are unwilling to lay more than is necessary, it ought to be stated here that he was probably led astray, with reference to the opinions of Irenæus, by Muenscher, a German writer on "*Dogmatics*," translated some years ago by Dr. Murdock. But the passages relied upon by Muenscher to sustain his affirmation, though slightly ambiguous, contain no such idea. Nay, they seem to us to teach the very reverse. Whether he had personally examined these passages we know not; for, in the translation at least, nothing but the references are given. The principal of these occurs in *Adver: Hæres: Lib. V. Cap.* 1.—Irenæus here teaches, in opposition to the Valentinians and Ebionites, that Jesus Christ, God incarnate can alone instruct us in divine things, and redeem us from the power of sin. He shows, therefore, that the Divine Word, "perfect in all things," being not only "almighty," but, also, "truly man," (verus homo) redeemed us by his own blood, in other words, "gave himself a ransom for those who were led into captivity" by sin, (redemptionem semetipsum dedit pro his qui in captivatatem ducti sunt.) He then adds: "Et quorum injuste dominabatur nobis Apostasia," (he here uses the abstract for the concrete, meaning by Apostasia, or Apostacy, Apostatus, or the Apostate, that is, as he explains it in another place, *Satan the great apostate,*) "et cum natura essemus Dei omnipotentis, alienavit nos contra naturam, suos proprios nos faciens discipulos, potens in omnibus Dei Verbum, et non deficiens in sua justitia, juste etiam adversus ipsam conversus est apostasiam, ea quæ sunt sua redimus ab ea (v. r. *eo*) non cum vi, quemadmodum illa initio dominabatur nostri, ea quæ non erant sua insatiabiliter rapiens; sed secundum suadelam, quemadmodum decebat Deum suadentem, et non vim inferentem, accipere quæ vellet, ut neque quod est justum confringeretur, neque antiqua plasmatio Dei depiriret." Now, in this passage, Irenæus simply teaches that Jesus Christ redeemed us from the unjust bondage of Satan, or of the great apostasia, apostacy, by which men fell under the dominion of the evil principle, not by *absolute force* or *violence*, but by *moral means*, thus vindicating justice, by the shedding of his blood, not as a ransom to the devil, but as a ransom to justice. The word *suadela*, used patristically, means *moral argument* or *influence*, rather than persuasion or eloquence, and covers the whole ground of what Christ did and suffered to redeem us from the bondage of sin. For Irenæus immediately adds, as if to put the whole matter beyond a doubt, "Suo igitur sanguine redimente nos Domino, et dante animam suam pro nostra anima, et carnem suam pro nostris carnibus, et effundente spiritum, &c. In this way, he shows that man, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and united to God incarnate, is restored to life and immortality; not by force or violence, but by a di-

immediately after death on the cross, and there "endured, for three days, the agonies of the lost," as a part of the

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vine and moral influence, flowing to the soul through the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. So far, then, from teaching the gross absurdity ascribed to him by Dr. B., he vindicates the essential truth of the Gospel, that in the very means to rescue man from sin, law and justice are maintained and established. Satan is vanquished, not by force, but by justice. His chains are loosened by the blood of the Son of God.

Another passage referred to by Muenscher occurs, *Adver: Hæres: Lib. V. Cap.* 21; but so far from proving his point, proves the very reverse; for, there, Christ is represented as fulfilling that ancient prophecy that "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," and thus vanquishing forever our spiritual adversary. How clear and pointed, for example, the following: "Dominus factus ex muliere, et *destruens* adversarium nostrum, et perficiens hominem secundum imaginem et similitudinem Dei."

We are happy to find our views of the teaching of Irenæus confirmed to the letter, by so competent an authority as Neander, who, speaking of a certain peculiarity in the mode of teaching respecting the redemption of Christ, in a Marcion, an Irenæus, and an Origen, says, (Church History, I. 641.) "It is this idea: Satan hitherto ruled mankind, over whom he had acquired a certain right, because the first man fell under the temptation to sin, and was thereby brought under servitude to the evil one. God did not deprive him of this right by force, but caused him to lose it in a way strictly conformable to law. By him, (Christ) the representative of human nature, the latter has been delivered, on grounds of reason and justice, from the dominion of Satan."

Thus Neander shows, according to this view, that redemption from the power of evil, is "a legal process in the history of the world, corresponding to the requisitions of the moral order of the universe," an idea at once philosophical and scriptural. He then gives the following, as a condensed expression of the views of Irenæus: "Only the Word of the Father himself could declare to us the Father; and we could not learn from him, unless the teacher himself had appeared among us. Man must become used to receive God into himself, God must become used to dwell in humanity. The Mediator, betwixt both, must, once more, restore the union between both, by his relationship to both. * * * In a human nature which was like to that burdened with sin, he *condemned* sin, and then banished it as a thing condemned out of human nature, Rom. 8: 3; but he required men to become like him. *Men were the prisoners of the evil one*, (the italics are ours,) *of Satan; Christ gave himself a ransom for the prisoners. Sin reigned over us who belonged to God; God delivered us not by force, but in a way of justice, inasmuch as he redeemed those who were his own. If he had not, as man, overcome the adversary of man; if the enemy had not been overcome in the way of justice; and, on the other hand, if he had not as God, bestowed the gift of salvation, we should not have that gift in a way which is secure. And if man did not become united with God, he could have no share in an imperishable life. It was through the obedience of one man that many must become justified, and obtain salvation; for eternal life is the fruit of justice.*"

penalty of transgression, and quotes some American divine, who, thirty years ago, represented Christ as receiving the stroke of vengeance from his Father's hand, and thus dying, not "by consent," but by "authority."*

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* We are sorry once more to be under the necessity of charging Dr. B. with misrepresentation. It is not, however, to be supposed, from his theological preferences, that he is in the habit of conning, very carefully, the pages of Calvin; and, it was doubtless from recollection, or from hearsay, that he fell into the mistake of ascribing to that eminent and learned divine "the truly horrible doctrine" that "Christ descended into hell, when crucified, and suffered the pains of the damned for three days." (p. 194.) It is not, indeed, improbable that he may have relied too implicitly on Muenscher, whose "Dogmatik" reminds us very much of Bossuet's celebrated "Variations of Protestantism," and is about as fair a representation of the doctrinal theology of the Church. Of late years, Calvin has been better appreciated in Germany than he was in the days of Muenscher, being diligently studied and greatly admired by such men as Tholuck, Hengstenberg, and Ullmann. His views, indeed, on the subject of the atonement, are somewhat high; but he certainly nowhere falls into the gross absurdity of making Christ suffer the pangs of the lost for three days in hell. He is commenting (Institutes, Book, II. C. XVI,) on that expression in the Apostle's Creed, so called, "he descended into hell," and shows that this may be regarded as figurative, having reference not to the *burial* of Christ, but to what *preceded his burial;* not to a descent into Hades or Hell, but to the endurance of terrible conflicts with the powers of darkness on the cross; in a word, to the profound and mysterious agonies of his "passion." As it was necessary, according to Calvin, that Christ should suffer for us, the penalty of violated law, he shows that it behooved him "to contend with the powers of hell, and the horror of eternal death." In other words, he shows, by citations from the Scriptures, that he suffered not only "corporeally, but spiritually," not in the *body* only, but in the *soul*, that his pangs were peculiar and awful, and equivalent, therefore, to the pangs of the lost, though with this difference, as he states, that he could not be "holden of the pains of death." He then positively denies what some of the old Catholic writers held, that Christ actually descended into hell after the crucifixion, and gives a view of Christ's sufferings similar to that held by the old school divines. He shows, too, in a very striking manner, (Lib II, Cap. 16, § 12,) that, to all this, Christ "was not compelled by violence or necessity, but induced merely by his mercy and love for us." In a word, his doctrine is that of an expiation or satisfaction made by Christ's enduring the penalty of the law; and, hence, that the expression "descended into hell," may be regarded as a strong and figurative mode of describing his sufferings.

Calvin is by no means infallible. Some of his ideas and expressions may be extravagant; but, as a whole, he is one of the ablest and soundest theologians. His mind was at once clear and penetrating, and, what is better, remarkably reverent and devout. At all events, he deserves fair and honorable treatment from us all. "You have caught me," said the sceptical but able Bolingbroke to Church," a loose minister of the English Church, "reading John Calvin. He was, indeed, a man

He says that there is a general concurrence in the words *vicarious*, *expiation*, *offering*, *substitute*, and the like, but no agreement as to the manner in which they are to get their meaning.

He also refers, in the briefest and most unsatisfactory manner, to the opinions advocated by Beman, Jenkyn, and others, that the atonement is to be regarded as a governmental expedient, securing equally the great ends of justice and mercy, and that its value is to be measured, chiefly, by its expression,—the dignity of our Saviour's person giving import and value to his voluntary sufferings in our behalf. We have no confidence ourselves, in the superficial philosophy upon which this view is *ordinarily* based, a view which seems to make justice a temporary expedient, and not an eternal principle, and lowers our estimation of the sufferings of Christ as little better than those of a martyr; but it demanded a more respectful notice, and a more extended examination at the hands of Dr. B.

"On the whole," he adds, summing up the matter in his comprehensive way, "I know of no definite and fixed point, on which the orthodox view, so called, may be said to hang, unless it be this, that Christ suffers evil as evil, or in direct and simple substitution for evil that was to be suffered by

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of great parts, profound sense, and vast learning. He handles the doctrines of grace in a masterly manner." "Doctrines of grace!" exclaimed Church: "the doctrines of grace have set all mankind by the ears." "I am surprised," replied Bolingbroke, "to hear you say so; you, who profess to believe and preach Christianity. These doctrines are, certainly, the doctrines of the Bible; and, if I believed the Bible, I must believe them; and, let me tell you seriously, that the greatest miracle in the world, is the existence of Christianity, and its preservation as a religion, when the preaching of it is committed to the care of such unchristian wretches as you are."

us; so that God accepts one evil in place of the other, and being satisfied in this manner, is able to justify or pardon."

Now, will any man, at all acquainted with theological literature, undertake to say that such is a fair and sober estimate of the doctrine of the Church, or of the great body of evangelical Christians, on the subject of the Atonement, the doctrine which, by his own confession, has formed the basis of hope and the source of joy to saints and martyrs, from the earliest period of the Christian era? Would any one maintain that such is the view in which Irenæus and Augustine, Luther, Zuinglius and Melancthon, Taylor and Hooker, Baxter and Howe, John Wesley and Robert Hall united as the power of God and the wisdom of God for the salvation of the world?

In the first place, we might well inquire what is meant by the expression that Christ "suffers evil for evil," or that "he suffers" evil as evil?" Then, again, we might ask, Can "evil" ever be suffered except as "evil?" Nay, we might still further inquire whether Dr. B. himself, in the subsequent parts of his discourse, does not make Christ, innocent and divine though he be, suffer the most terrible "evil?" For our part, we know of no theologian, of any repute, who maintains that Christ suffered "evil as evil," that is, as we understand Dr. B., evil for its own sake. We know of none, moreover, who represents Christ as suffering, *involuntarily*, either evil or the results of evil. Calvin himself does not so represent the case. That eminent divine speaks of his agonies, terrible as he deemed them, as an atonement or expiation, voluntarily endured, for the ben-

efit of the world. If Christ endured "evil as evil," then he himself chose that evil, and he alone is responsible. But where is the theologian who maintains that Christ "sinned for us?" He only suffered for our sins," a fact which Dr. B. himself admits.

Dr. B.'s arguments may be good against extreme views of the atonement, or improper declamatory modes of representing it, but they are of no force whatever against the scriptural fact, in which all evangelical Christians unite, that "He who knew no sin was made sin for us"—that "the just suffered for the unjust"—in a word, that Christ suffered and died "under the curse of the law," and thus "made an atonement for us."

Then, again, it deserves Dr. B.'s attention, that a doctrine or fact like that of the atonement, is one thing, and particular theories or speculations to account for it, as also particular illustrations to elucidate it, are quite another thing. The orthodox may be agreed in the doctrine, but not in their modes of defending or explaining it. Their creed may be good, but their philosophy may be imperfect; or their doctrine may be true, but their mode of expression defective and variant. But it would be most unfair and ungenerous to take some imperfect, ill-expressed theory of an individual, or the infelicitous, perhaps erroneous explanation of an individual, as a type and specimen of the whole. Dr. B. himself claims to be orthodox, or as good as orthodox, but who would take his *objective altar theory*, and adduce that as a fair specimen of the orthodox doctrine? But such a procedure would be as fair as to take the ex-

travagant expression of Irenæus, supposing it to be really his, which it is not,) or the extravagant theory ascribed to Calvin, as the doctrine of the Church!

It would be equally unfair and ungenerous to take any number of such instances, and from such narrow generalization, come to the sweeping conclusion that those who maintain the orthodox view, agree in representing Jesus Christ as suffering "evil as evil," or in "direct and simple *substitution* for evil."

As we have intimated, Dr. B. himself assumes that Jesus Christ, with a view to the redemption of the lost, voluntarily *suffered evil*, and his theory on this ground is just as difficult of explanation as any view taken by the orthodox. If he says no—for Christ suffered evil on his way to the accomplishment of a great good—we reply that it makes no difference; for the case he cites of a man passing over desolate rocks, in a snow storm, not for the sake of the exposure, but to carry food to a starving family, is not analogous to the case in hand! If the man had a choice of two roads, or if he had power to make his own road, without the necessity of exposure, it would have been analogous, though only in a single particular. For our Saviour's object was not simply to bring us relief, but to bring it in such a way as to vindicate eternal justice, and save the sinner from the consequences of his sin. Possessing all power in heaven and on earth, he deliberately, and on purpose, chose the road of suffering. He chose it, that thus both justice and love might be vindicated, while the rebel was redeemed. Thus he came into the world to suffer and die. He lived

for that specific purpose, made all his arrangements with a view to that result. Doubtless he had an ultimate end in view; but the other, as a means, became necessary to the accomplishment of that end; so that it, too, became an end, equally necessary and equally important. Thus he suffered evil "not as evil," but as a means to an end. He died, not "in direct and simple substitution of "evil for evil," but to vindicate the government of God, and yet secure the salvation of the lost.

But we will proceed to state what we conceive to be the orthodox or evangelical belief upon this subject, and then point out the difference between this and the theory of Dr. B.

A subject of belief may be stated as a fact—or as a doctrine—or as a speculation.

Touching the Atonement as a fact, the general evangelical belief, so far as we understand it, is this, that to save men from their sins, first to secure their forgiveness, and, secondly, renovation, Jesus Christ, the true God and eternal Life, became incarnate, that is, became man, and in that nature endured shame, agony and death, sometimes called the "curse of the law," and is therefore "set forth" as "a propitiation," or propitiatory "sacrifice" for the sins of the whole world," on which ground "repentance and remission" have been "proclaimed unto all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." This is the simple historical fact, a fact new, and in a high degree mysterious and affecting, and bringing home to our hearts, in a manner the most overwhelming, the love, the justice and the pity of God.

As a doctrine, the sufferings and death of Christ are a proper expiation for sin, in some way, perhaps not wholly explained, satisfying the claims of justice, while securing pardon and eternal life to the guilty penitent. In other words, the atonement or sacrifice of Christ, involved, in some important sense, the substitution of the *innocent* for the *guilty*. We deserved to die, but Christ "died for us;" not simply for our benefit, for that is not the meaning of the expression here, but in our stead, not suffering "evil as evil," but suffering evil, to vindicate the love and justice of Jehovah in the redemption of the lost. In becoming man he "took on him" not only our nature, but our "infirmities and sins," and though innocent and even perfect, bore in their most appalling forms, all the consequences of such infirmities and sins—pain—anguish—amazement—horror—death—a strange mystery of love and sorrow, such as earth saw never, such as God only can solve. "The just suffered for (in the stead of) the unjust"—the *sinless* ("he who knew no sin") for the *sinful*. In other words, the *innocent*—nay, more, the *Divine*, suffered *under the conditions of human guilt*, permitted to come upon him the consequences of our apostasy, in order that he might discover to men the amazing, all-conquering love of God, and not only so, but vindicate the integrity of the law, the great law of the moral universe, which *must have its course*, and which will not spare even "the immaculate One," assuming the nature, and standing in the place of the guilty; and since by this means, and *by this alone*, penitent sinners are saved from sin and all the consequences of sin, his sufferings and death

upon earth are literally and truly, instead of their sufferings and death in hell.

In speaking of such a doctrine, orthodox divines, of course, use every variety of language, the language of Scripture, and the language of common life. Sometimes they speak of God "smiting the Shepherd," "delivering up his Son to the death for us all," abandoning him in the garden and on the tree; nay, as bringing upon him, by deliberate choice, all the shame, anguish and despair of crucifixion. But this language, though coincident with that of the Scripture, and of Hebrew phraseology in general, is neither precise nor philosophical, but general and popular. Sometimes they go farther, and may even misrepresent the transaction; but whenever they speak seriously and deliberately regarding it, they mean that God was present in the whole transaction, and that the sacrifice of the Son was equally the sacrifice of the Father.

Some of them, nay, quite a number, speak of Christ, in this transaction, as having endured the penalty of the law; and certainly such language is not stronger than that of the Scripture, which represents him as enduring "the curse" of the law, as "made sin," as "bearing our sins," bearing our iniquities, and so forth. Still, they evidently use the word penalty in some loose and popular sense. For if the inquiry were made, do you mean to affirm that Christ suffered eternal death," which is the penalty of the law, or the punitive result of sin; and they would instantly answer, *No.* But if all or any of the consequences of sin are a part of its penalty; if, in a word, the law is of such a nature as to

vindicate itself, not by a direct punitive infliction from without, but by a necessary action and result, which is suffering and death; then as Christ suffered under the conditions of human guilt, his sufferings and death may be spoken of as the penalty of the law. There is a sense in which all things whatever are done by God; but the perfection of his laws are such that they work themselves clear, that is, by a necessary action in the very nature of things, rewarding the good and punishing the bad. Thus if I violate the law of gravitation, I may be thrown from a precipice, and the result is temporal death; so if I violate the law of purity and of love which binds me to God, I fall from God, and the result is spiritual death. Sin, not God, brought death into the world, and all our woe. But that death and that woe, though not inflicted by an absolute intervention on the part of God, but by the necessary action of law, may yet be said to come from God, the great fountain of all law. Thus, then, if Jesus Christ suffered under the conditions of human guilt, he did not suffer by an absolute infliction or punishment, but from the necessary action of the laws under which he voluntarily placed himself. The result—anguish, horror, death—flow from our sins, for which he suffered—come upon him by a necessary action. As we said before, the law must have its course, even if the immaculate Son of God should suffer and die. This, then, being the result of law, and law deriving all its power and sanction from the absolute God, it might be appropriately spoken of as the penalty of sin. And indeed this is no more than what the prophet means when he says "the chastisement

(penalty or punishment) of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."

But the majority of theologians would say, that Christ endured the penalty of the law only in this sense, that his agonies, whatever they were, came from our sins; not that he suffered the pangs of hell, or the horror of the second death; but an anguish, which, considering the dignity of his person, and the tenderness of his heart, might be taken as an equivalent; so that all the penalty which ever comes from sin, as far as believers are concerned, was visited upon him. His death upon the cross has averted our death in hell.*

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* It is but an act of justice to give the view of the old school divines, so called, upon this subject, in their own carefully selected words. The following, from a very able review of "Beman on the Atonement," in the first series of the "Princeton Theological Essays," is about as fair and satisfactory as any thing we have seen.

"A third method by which the Scriptures teach us the nature of the atonement, is by express declarations concerning the nature of his sufferings, or the immediate design of his death. It is expressly taught that his sufferings were penal, that he endured the penalty of the law, and that he thus suffered, not for himself, but for us. This is a point about which there is so much strange misconception, that it is necessary to explain the meaning of the terms here used. The sufferings of rational beings are either calamities, having no reference to sin, or chastisement designed for the improvement of the sufferer, or penal when designed for the satisfaction of justice. Now, what is meant by the language above used is, that the sufferings of Christ were not mere calamities; neither were they chastisements (in the sense just stated,) nor were they simply exemplary, nor merely symbolical, designed to teach this or that truth, but that they were penal, i. e., designed to satisfy divine justice. This is the distinctive character assigned to them in Scripture. Again: by the penalty of the law is meant that suffering which the law demands as a satisfaction to justice. It is not any specific kind or degree of suffering, for it varies both as to degree and kind, in every supposable case of its infliction. The sufferings of no two men that ever lived, are precisely alike, in this world or the next, unless their constitution, temperament, sins, feelings, and circumstances were precisely alike, which is absolutely incredible. The objection, therefore, started by Socinus, that Christ did not suffer the penalty of the law, because he did not suffer remorse, despair, or eternal banishment from God, was answered, by cotemporary theologians, by denying that those things entered essentially into the penalty of the law. That penalty is in

Human governments cannot remit deserved penalties. They may assume the right, but it cannot hold, except in those cases where such penalties are not fairly incurred. So that penitence—reformation even—is of no avail; *the guilty must suffer.* But it may not be so in the government of God. Jehovah, who is himself law, may remit a penalty, *if he so pleases.* Christ suffered for us, and in consequence we repent. God, then, for Christ's sake, remits the penalty which we had incurred, and which we must have suffered, if Christ had not died. But that Jesus Christ was punished by an absolute infliction, and punished in the same sense that we should have been punished, that is, "with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," few, very few sober orthodox divines would maintain.

Such, then, is the doctrine—the substitution of the innocent for the guilty, and the forgiveness, justification, and

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Scripture called death, which includes every kind of evil inflicted by divine justice in punishment of sin; and inasmuch as Christ suffered such evil, and to such a degree as fully satisfied divine justice, he suffered what the Scriptures call the penalty of the law. It is not the nature, but the relation of sufferings to the law, which gives them their distinctive character. What degree of suffering the law demands, as it varies in every specific case, God only can determine. The sufferings of Christ were unutterably great; still, with one voice, Papists, Lutherans, and Reformed, rebutted the objection of Socinus, that the transient sufferings of one man could not be equivalent to the sufferings to the sins of men, by referring, not to the degree of the Saviour's anguish, as equal to the misery due to all for whom he died, but to the infinite dignity of his person. It was the Lord of glory who was crucified. As the bodily sufferings of a man are referred to his whole person, so the Scriptures refer the sufferings of Christ's human nature to his whole person. And he was a divine, and not a human person; but a divine person with a human nature. This is an awful subject, on which all irreverent speculation must be very offensive to God. Let it be enough to say with the Scriptures that Christ suffered the penalty of the law in our stead, and that the penalty of the law was that kind and amount of suffering, which, from such a Person, was a full satisfaction to the divine justice."

salvation of the guilty, by virtue of the expiatory sacrifice and atonement of Jesus Christ. Its effect upon us is, first, to convince of sin, to produce repentance and change; secondly, to justify and redeem, in other words, to save first from the condemnation, and secondly, from the domination of sin.

But we have said, that a subject of belief may be regarded as a speculation; in other words, as a theory or philosophy. And it is just here that the greatest variety of opinion prevails among those who, in a general sense, are styled the orthodox. Their modes of justifying the Atonement are various, and perhaps somewhat unsatisfactory; just as Dr. B.'s philosophy upon the subject is unsatisfactory. "Sometimes," as Dr. B. states, "the analogy of criminal law is taken; and then our sins are spoken of as being transferred to Christ, or he as having accepted them to bear their penalty. Sometimes the civil or commercial law furnishes the analogy; and then our sins, being taken as a debt, Christ offers himself as a ransom for us." The whole, however, resolves itself under this head, into a theory or speculation on government; but all analogies from human governments are imperfect, and if pushed too far, create false and injurious impressions. The case of Zaleucus and his son, for example, though affecting enough, and in one or two points, good for an illustration, after all, has no just analogy here, and we dismiss it as willingly as Dr. B. Civil and commercial transactions cannot certainly form any just and adequate parallel in such a case, and so we abandon them also. The atonement of Christ assuredly has nothing in it akin to com-

merce or trade. But the ritual law of the ancient dispensation—which Dr. B. couples with these cases of false analogy—the offering of sacrifice, and the shedding of blood, do supply some just analogies in the case, for they were selected by God for this express purpose. But their import certainly is neither difficult nor recondite. Nor is it the philosophy of the transaction, but rather its moral import which they indicate. They discover not the philosophy, but the fact of propitiation in its relations to the purpose of God and to the conscience of the sinner. The true meaning of sacrifice we must get in Christ himself.

One thing, however, is certain, God has a government over man. The Law is sacred. It cannot be violated with impunity. And if Christ himself comes under it, he must suffer. What he suffered no tongue can express. But he suffered as the innocent for the guilty, the just for the unjust; and in our view the whole subject, in its interior depths, and especially in its divine and governmental relations, is a profound mystery. Speculation and philosophy are at utter fault here. The case is peculiar. There is nothing in the universe like it. It cannot, it must not be judged by human analogies. And it is just on this ground that we find fault with some of Dr. B.'s speculations. Because human, that is, limited and imperfect governments, which owe allegiance to a higher Power, and have no right, therefore, to make any change or modification in their administration, to save the condemned criminal from the punishment which he has justly merited, and cannot, therefore, accept of any substitute, he infers, rea-

soning from an analogy which he himself confesses imperfect, that the government of God cannot do so. Because *man* cannot, or must not, (that is the premise,) therefore (such is the conclusion,) Jehovah cannot! If that is not a specimen of false logic we know not what is. May we not venture, even, to call it a "wooden dogma?"

We ourselves take the ground, and take it cheerfully, that human governments transcend their powers when they remit punishment where it is *deserved*, or in any case whatever, accept of a substitution, as, for example, the father for the child, or the child for the father; and for this simple reason, that they are amenable to a higher Power, that is, to God, the final, absolute authority in the universe. But to assume that in no case, of which He alone is the competent judge, the infinite God himself can remit punishment, or accept a substitute provided and approved by himself, is unfounded and presumptuous. It is going beyond the record. It is even going beyond common sense.

But God himself, says Dr. B., (p. 226) is "obedient to law." Yes, and that admission is of immense importance; for it is on that ground that he cannot and will not remit the penalty of transgression, except by some new and unheard of method, by which eternal justice may be maintained, while pardon and salvation are conferred upon the penitent. "For what the law could not do in that, it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin *condemned sin in the flesh*, that the *righteousness of the law* might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

This, however, is a question of fact. God has remitted the penalty on the behalf of all believing penitents, and remitted it, because "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."

If, therefore, any one shall say that the transaction takes hold of the great principles of the Divine government, and upholds eternal justice as well as eternal love, what has Dr. B., or any other man, who reveres the Bible, to object?

But we will not permit ourselves to speculate upon the subject. Enough for us to know that God himself has found an atonement, on the ground of which he can be just, and yet justify the ungodly; yes, "set him right before the government of God" on his simple faith, and before he has done a single thing to merit the Divine favor!

But we return to Dr. B.'s theory, and will endeavor to show wherein it differs from the common orthodox view, and wherein it differs from the Word of God. He assumes that Christ did not suffer in any proper sense, as a substitute for the guilty; that his death had no special relation to the divine government, in satisfying the justice of God, that it had no effect in itself, and irrespective of its subjective influence upon the sinner, in procuring the remission of sins; that it was not a proper atonement or expiation, and possessed no sacrificial character, except as a matter of form; and that consequently the atonement is, strictly speaking, subjective, and consists in the reconciliation of the sinner to God, and his restoration to purity and happiness.

In opposition to which, the Word of God plainly teaches

and all evangelical Christians believe, that Christ is a true propitiation for our sins, that he suffered, the just for the unjust, that he endured the curse that we might be delivered from its influence; in other words, that in some important sense, not, perhaps, fully explained, he suffered as our substitute, and that on this ground, the government of God is vindicated, and a basis laid for extending pardon, justification, and eternal life to all who believe. His death, therefore, did possess a sacrificial or expiatory character, and the atonement is not only subjective in its ends, but objective in its very nature and essence, and it is for this reason, and not simply from association of ideas, that we trust in Christ, confide in his merits, and plead his blood.

If Dr. B. replies that the idea of such substitution involves an act of injustice—that it is the endurance of "evil as evil," or "the direct and simple substitution of evil for evil," we reply, be it so. For after all, the sufferings and death of Christ look amazingly like the endurance of "evil for evil," or rather the endurance "of evil" for good; so that the "evil" which ought to have come upon us, came upon him; and we run no risk of error, in speaking of Christ, or relying upon Christ, as the soul's "expiation," not simply as a figure or a form, but as a reality and a fact. But what are we saying or admitting? An act of injustice! The atoning sacrifice of Christ an act of injustice? The substitution of the Lamb of God instead of the guilty and the perishing an act of injustice? To whom? To what? To God? Was he not in it? To man? Is he not saved by it? To the law? Is

it not magnified and made honorable by means of it? Injustice! No! no! There is no injustice here; but the highest justice, the most amazing goodness, the most transcendent grace.

But we will prove that it is no injustice by Dr. B.'s own words, who, forgetting his theories and objections, speaks thus of the death and passion of him whom he had proved not only innocent, but even Divine! "Come," says he, (p. 215) "to the spectacle of Christ's suffering life and death, as to a mystery wholly transcendent, save in what it expresses of divine feeling. Call what of this feeling you receive the reality—all else the *Machina Dei* for the expression of this. With deepest reverence of soul, approach that most mysterious sacrament of love, the agony of Jesus; note the patience of his trial, the meekness of his submission to injustice, and the malignant passions of his enemies; behold the creation itself darkening and shuddering with a horror of sensibility at the scene transpiring in his death; hear the cry of the crucified: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;' then regard the Life that was manifested dropping into cessation, and thereby signifying the deposit of itself in the bosom of that malign world, to whose enmity it was yielded."

Nay, more than this, Dr. B. represents Christ as actually "*interrupting the flow of justice* by delivering men, or assisting them to deliver themselves from the penal consequences of transgression"—"coming under the desecrated law of God"—doing and suffering this as God—"God

manifest in the flesh," and thus "signifying to mankind the self-renouncing and sublime obedience of the divine nature"—enduring unutterable agony, to vindicate his law, and reach the hearts of his creatures—"yielding his Life, as a contribution from God to the pacification and reconstruction of his realm; and, finally, taking the attitude of submission to evil."

"May I," says he, p. 241, and here is his grand admission, and our principal proof of most of the positions we have taken, "May I, without defect of reverence, express the deeper truth, that which is the appalling mystery of God in Jesus Christ—mystery, yet philosophy, of the divinest work of God, called redemption, the King Himself here takes the attitude of *submission to evil.** Requiring of us to vanquish wrong by a patient submission thereto, he does it, not as duty or wisdom only for us, but because it is a first law of power that a malignant, or bad spirit, will soonest yield to endurance, and is least of all able to endure the meekness of love. Observing this just truth himself, the divine Word is incarnated in the form of a servant, moving here upon the heart of evil from a point below it, attacking sin, not by penalties only, but by submission rather. The *malign spirit* rises, bursting forth in a storm of deadly violence against his person. The *only perfect being* that ever lived in the flesh, he became the *most insulted and abused being.* But, loaded as he is with insult, and dragged out to die, he bears the concentrated venom

* The italics are ours.

of his persecutors with a lamb's patience, makes no answer, replies no taunt, complains of no severity. We see him, in fact, *descending below our malignity*, that it *may break itself against his divine patience.* He outreaches, by his love, the measure of our animosities—the wrong will in us, all the malignities of our devilish passion, feel themselves outdone. *The submission of the Word* fairly broke its spirit, and ever since that day has it been falling visibly as Lucifer from heaven."

That there is nothing in the atonement of the nature of "vindictive punishment," as it is sometimes called, or, that Jesus Christ did not, so far as we can see, suffer, in the proper and absolute sense of that expression, the penalty of the law, which is death eternal, we have already admitted; but that his sufferings, awful, mysterious, transcendent, are a substitution for ours, an equivalent for the absolute punishment of sin, and, therefore, a real satisfaction in law, who, after reading Dr. B.'s admissions, first, as to the teachings of the Scripture in regard to what he calls "the Altar Form" of the doctrine, and then as to the actual sufferings of Christ, whom he describes as even more divine than human, can hesitate to admit? Ah! it is in perusing the plain, artless descriptions of Holy Writ, or, in gazing, in mute adoration, upon the suffering Saviour in Gethsemane, or upon the cross, that we lose sight of our philosophical speculations, and feel through all our souls, that he suffered as a sacrifice for sin.

After what we have said, it seems quite unnecessary further to take up Dr. B.'s objective, ritualistic, or Altar

Form of the atonement; for that falls to the ground as a matter of course, and, indeed, it is a speculation so completely intangible and extravagant, as scarcely to deserve attention. Indeed, it amounts, as we have seen, to a denial of the doctrine of atonement.

But Dr. B. admits that sacrifices were of divine origin, and that they prefigured the atonement. He admits, also, that the apostles, even when rejecting the ritual of the Old Testament Scripture, as done away, or, rather, as fulfilled in Christ, yet persisted in describing the atonement as a sacrifice, or a propitiation. He mistakes, however, in affirming that those ancient sacrifices prefigured *life*, rather than *death;* that the blood being sacred, and regarded as the life of the animal, was shed, to adumbrate, in a mystic way, the communication of life, by means of the atonement, rather than the atonement itself. Such an explanation is exceedingly far-fetched, and unsatisfactory. That a bloody sacrifice, or a whole burnt-offering should prefigure the infusion, or the communication, from God, of life to the soul of man, is preposterous. The simple fact is, these ancient sacrifices were sacrifices of expiation, sacrifices for sin; in other words, sacrifices for atonement and reconciliation. The death of the animal, and the sprinkling of its blood, *not upon the individual* offering it, but upon *the mercy seat*, shadowed forth the fact, that by virtue of the divine appointment, sacrifice or expiation availed for the *pacification of justice*, and the pardon of the offender. Hence, the sins of the people were confessed upon the head of the victim; or when two victims were used, as on the great day of

atonement, the sins of the people were put upon the head of the one which was carried far into the wilderness, while the other was slain, and its blood sprinkled, by the High Priest, upon the mercy seat; thus signifying the great fact or principle, that in consequence of the death of Christ, sin is forgiven or borne away, never again to be charged, never again to be remembered. Referring to this very fact, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, the apostle adds: "So once in the end of the world hath Christ appeared to put away (bear away) sin, by the sacrifice of himself, and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation;" and, on the same principle, John the Baptist points to Jesus Christ as "the Lamb of God which taketh (beareth away) the sin of the world."

This, then, is the mysterious, but all-glorious, all-transforming fact of the Gospel; that by his obedience unto death, Jesus Christ has "brought in everlasting righteousness," which is "unto all and upon all them that believe." Here the weary, trembling spirit finds rest. Here come the penitent of all ages, prophets, apostles, martyrs, kings, priests, peasants, philosophers—all come here, not to some sacrificial form, but to Jesus Christ himself, whose blood cleanseth from all sin. Around this true and living sacrifice cluster the universal church, the redeemed on earth, and the redeemed in heaven, evermore singing the new song of Moses and the Lamb.

Here, then, we cry out with Dr. B., meeting him once more on practical ground, and bending in reverence before the Cross of Christ, "What infinite pains does he take

to bring down His love to us!" Here, O sacred mystery! he opens to us the depths of his heart, penetrated with the love and sorrow of the one great sacrifice for sin. Here he unites himself to our wretchedness, and takes us to his bosom. O that we understood it as we ought, and felt its transforming power! In order to which, let us pray with the Apostle Paul, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, that we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every other name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

And now to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

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